

NUMBER 84

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FORTEAN TIMES

THE JOURNAL OF STRANGE PHENOMENA



SWINE FEVER!

TRAWLermen's Trotter Trauma

WIRED FOR WEIRD

THE FORTEAN GUIDE TO THE INTERNET

MORE ALIEN BODIES, ITALIAN SKYQUAKES,
SUPPING STATUES, CORNWALL'S SEA SERPENT



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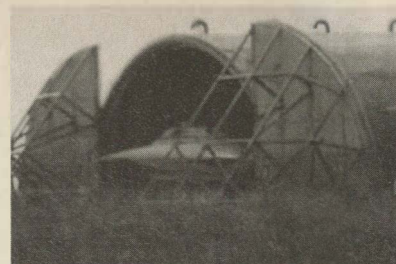
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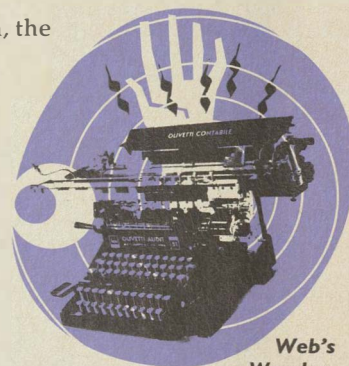
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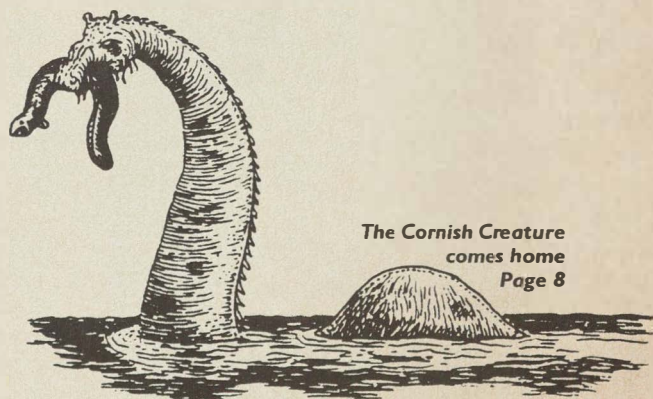
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NEXT ISSUE Fortean Times 85 will be on the news-stands from 10 February 1996. It will feature an assessment of the biological evidence of alien gynæcology, out-of-place crocodiles in Australia, and British wolverine sightings.

Cover illustration: Tony Stone Images

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EDITORIAL

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Bob Rickard & Paul Sieveking.

Quick march

Fortean Times has seen many changes in its 22-year history, but none so momentous as the one about to happen. From May 1996 - issue 86 - the magazine goes monthly, allowing us to be more up-to-date with our news and reviews. The steady increase in our readership shows that there is an international market for an intelligently sceptical and compassionate news magazine devoted to the widest possible range of strange phenomena, beliefs and experiences, made possible by our global network of weird-watchers, for whom we give thanks every time the postman calls.

The most obvious and visible change will be a thorough overhaul of our page design and layout, including a revamped masthead - previewed on page 20, so that you know what to look for on the news-stands.

In this issue, we report on the fastest-spreading religious rumour in history - that idols of Hindu gods were drinking milk - and try to discern its origin. The speed of its dissemination was partly due to believers in touch with each other on the Internet. We also provide a beginner's guide to some of the stranger roadside attractions to be found on the Infobahn and how to get there.

We investigate saucer fever (without the milk) in Italy where there have been reports of mysterious aerial booms, also called 'skyquakes'. Our obscure quota for this issue is filled by an examination of the peculiar dread evoked by the pig among trawlermen of Hull. The murky swirl of rumour surrounding the Roswell alien autopsy film and related photo mysteries is updated on page 29. Of course, there's lots more besides. Just take a look...

[Signature]

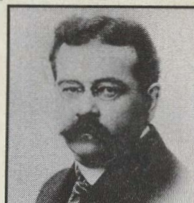
Paul Sieveking

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'FORTEAN'?

Fortean Times is a bi-monthly magazine of news, reviews and research on strange phenomena and experiences, curiosities, prodigies and portents. It was founded in 1973 to continue the work of Charles Fort. Throughout his life, Fort was sceptical about scientific explanations, observing how scientists argued according to their own beliefs rather than the rules of evidence and that inconvenient data was ignored, suppressed, discredited or explained away (which is quite different from explaining a thing).

Fort, born of Dutch stock in Albany, New York, spent many years researching scientific literature in the New York Public Library and the British Museum Library. He marshalled his evidence and set forth his philosophy in *The Book of the Damned* (1919), *New Lands* (1923), *Lo!* (1931), and *Wild Talents* (1932).

His dictum "One measures a circle beginning anywhere" expresses his philosophy of Continuity in which everything is in an intermediate state between extremes. He had notions of the universe-as-organism and the transient nature of all apparent phenomena. He coined the term 'teleportation' and was perhaps the first to speculate that mysterious lights seen in the sky might be craft from outer space. However, he cut at the very roots of credulity: "I conceive of nothing, in religion, science or philosophy, that is more than the proper thing to wear, for a while."



Charles Hoy Fort
1874-1932

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<http://alpha.mic.dundee.ac.uk/ft/ft.cgi?-1,ft>

STRANGE DAYS

A BULLETIN OF MARVELS AND MYSTERIES



TOWERING AMBITION

Villagers from Vilafranca del Penedes in Spain failing once again to build a human tower last July. It was the 105th successive year that they have overreached themselves. *Int. Herald Tribune*, 24 July 1995. POPPERFOTO/REUTER

INGELA'S NIGHT MARE

On the morning of 10 July 1995, Ingela Gustavsson, 19, discovered that her horse, a young mare called Unni, was missing from her field in Österbymo in the province of Östergötland, Sweden. A couple of fallen poles in the fence suggested that she had escaped into the forest. Ingela searched all day with the help of neighbours and relatives, but there was no sign of the animal. Advertisements in the local paper and the police failed to help.

"I was out searching every day," said Ingela. "I walked miles and miles in the forest. Then we extended our search by car and drove down small forest roads. The worst of it was the uncertainty, not knowing if anyone had stolen the mare or slaughtered her; or if she had walked into a marsh and drowned."

Weeks passed by with no news. Then, at four in the morning of Saturday, 19 August, Ingela started out of her sleep. In a dream she had seen Unni grazing among the megaliths of a monument in the forest called Dackestenar (the Dacke stones) about two kilometres from her home. (Nils Dacke was a 16th century rebel leader of Småland who fought some battles in Östergötland. We don't know why these prehistoric megaliths have acquired his name.)

Ingela lay awake for two hours thinking about her dream and then called Richard, her boyfriend. He was sleepy and sceptical, but she insisted he come with her to Dackestenar. "We saw at once that the horse had been there," she said. "There were marks in the grass and a couple of yards away, near the river, we found fresh horse droppings."

The horse was found on a path nearby. She was very thin, but unharmed. Six weeks in the forest had made her rather wild, but a bucket of oats Ingela and Richard had brought with them persuaded the animal to return to civilisation. *Express*, 22 Aug 1995.



Ingela Gustavsson, reunited with Unni, her mare.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

FORTEAN HEADLINES FROM NEWSPAPERS AROUND THE WORLD

**INCEST MORE COMMON THAN
THOUGHT IN AMERICA**

Guardian, 25 Aug 1994.

**HOME SECRETARY TO ACT
ON VIDEO NASTIES**

Guardian, 25 Aug 1994.

FARMER BITTEN SPLITTING DOGS

South Devon Herald Express, 27 Aug 1994.

**CAT-TOSSING LATEST FAD
ON ISRAELI HIGHWAYS**

New York Post, 2 Sept 1994.

MAGICIAN'S CAR VANISHES

Bristol Evening Post, 8 Sept 1994.

**VEGETABLES START TALKING
TO PROFESSOR**

Western Daily Press, 10 Sept 1994.

The Far Side by Gary Larson

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Appliance healing

THE SEOUL SURVIVORS



Choi Myong-suk holds hands with Yoo Ji-hwan, a fellow-survivor of the Sampoong store disaster.

Sampoong Department Store in Seoul, the capital of South Korea, collapsed on 29 June 1995, killing at least 359 people. Conventional wisdom among rescue workers states that after the first 48 hours, there is little chance of finding survivors of this kind of disaster and after a week, serious rescue efforts tend to peter out. But 10 days later, on 9 July, Choi Myong-suk, 21, was pulled alive from the rubble after rescue workers heard faint tapping.

He had been trapped in a space only four foot wide and had survived by drinking the intermittent trickle of rainwater and eating a cardboard box. Mr Choi thought that he had been there for only five days. Although he was dehydrated and had lost 11lbs in weight, otherwise he was in good health.

The day before the rescue, an expert in *ki* (life force radiance), Lim Kyong-taek, professor of political science at Mokpo University, had told rescuers that a young man was alive in the rubble. Standing silently on the site, he pinpointed the most unlikely place for a survivor – the centre of the rubble – and said a piece of heavy machinery should be moved. At first no one was found and the professor left, muttering: "It is strange." But 12 hours later, Mr Choi was found at the spot indicated.

Two days later, Yoo Ji Hwan, 18, was unearthed not far from where Mr Choi had been found. She had survived by sipping rainwater from a blanket. Miss Yoo, too, was in good health, despite an acute kidney problem caused by dehydration and malnutrition.

Another four days passed and then rescue workers found Park Seung-hyung, 19, who had been trapped face down for 16 days under concrete slabs. She was naked, having peeled off her clothes to survive the heat, and had had no food or water. "A monk appeared in dreams from time to time," she told her father. "He gave me an apple and this kept my hope alive." She was rescued underneath a collapsed lift shaft, not far from the other two survivors. Like Miss Yoo, she had a kidney problem but otherwise she was "in fairly good condition".

• A young road worker survived 40 days' entombment in 1994 after a landslide near the Wu River in China's Sichuan province on 30 April. Zeng Shuhua, 20, weighed only 30 kilos by the time peasants heard his groans and called for help. He had had no food and only a trickle of water.

[AP] 10+12 July; [AFP] 12 July; [R] 16 July; Int. Herald Tribune, 17 July 1995; [R] Bangkok Post, 22 June 1994.

BLACK GOLD BONANZA ENDS

Farmer Ian Duncan's mysterious source of free diesel has dried up after 20 years. Mr Duncan, 60, from Marywell, near Aberdeen, set up his pump for less than £50 when he noticed the fuel bubbling in a field just after the north-east oil boom took hold.

Over the next two decades, he helped himself to 10,000 gallons, on which he ran his car, tractor and central heating.

A string of experts failed to find the source of the diesel. It was thought that it might have leaked from a nearby petrol station, but nothing was found. Other investigators pointed to an old, underground Army tank as a source, but that too drew a blank.

With the supply drying up, it is presumed that the mystery will never be solved. *Scottish Daily Record*, 8 Mar 1995.

SIDELINES

• A STREET VENDOR cleaning a fish in the Caribbean port of Turbo on 12 September found "1124" on its side. About 300 people were inspired to use the number in the Colombian lottery and won over one million pounds. *Western Morning News*, 16 Sept 1995.

• TWO CHINESE SOLDIERS, patrolling their barracks on the outskirts of Beijing, captured a 2ft-long, 8lb grey rat with paws like a cat and an 8in tail as thick as a man's thumb. *Glasgow Herald*, 5 May 1995.

• AUSTRIAN CLIMBER Armin Liedl reported that a stray dog joined his group on the 7,000-metre Aconcagua in the Andes, the tallest mountain outside the Himalayas. At 6,500 metres, the dog barked his discovery of two lost and sick Argentine climbers, before accompanying the group to the top of the mountain and vanishing. *Brisbane Sun-Herald*, 19 Feb 1995.

• A TWO-YEAR-OLD GIRL who fell into a pool in Meyrargues, southern France, was saved by her boxer puppy. The parents of Coralie Maroli found the dog comforting her by licking her face. [AFP] 25 Feb 1995.

• A VERSION of the Indian rope trick was performed before the British Association on 12 September. Dr Tom Mullin, a physicist at Oxford University, made a length of bicycle brake cable stand on end by vibrating one end with an electric motor. "I have no idea why this happens," he said. "The only clue is that the cable contains a spring and has a plastic cover." *D. Telegraph*, 13 Sept 1995.

• DAVID JOSEPH ZABA, 32, poured varnish on his wife Angela during sex instead of the honey and chocolate syrup she was expecting. She pressed charges of assault and disturbing the peace, claiming that the varnish had made her hair fall out. The couple, from Denver, Colorado, had been using food as part of their sex life for six or seven years. According to the police report, Mrs Zaba "stated that this is not the first time that he has used varnish, but she has had enough." [AP] 29 June 1995.

SIDELINES

• **THE RIDDLE OF FIVE** dead sheep found dangling 100 foot up from trees or lying on the ground in a New Zealand forest was solved when a pilot admitted they had fallen from his helicopter. [R] 19 Sept 1995.

• **A UKRAINIAN MAN** of 21 accused of killing a woman and making a brassiere and shorts out of her skin told a court that he did it to calm his nerves. [AP] 6 July 1995.

• **GRIEVING HUSBAND** Andan Kazir of Dhaka, Bangladesh, was so distraught when his wife died he had her skinned so that he could wear her pelt as a coat. His wife weighed 27 stone so there was plenty of skin for the tailor to work with. *Sunday Express*, 19 Mar 1995.

• **A 17-YEAR-OLD** French girl, named only as Isabelle, was rushed to hospital when she started hallucinating. A brain scan showed a .22-calibre rifle bullet in her brain. Her mother recalled that when the girl was 15 months old, she came into the house with blood spurting from her head. She had called a doctor, who simply applied a bandage. *Leicester Mercury*, 24 May 1995.

• **A FORMER MINER'S** deafness was cured when his doctor took a lump of coal from his ear. The coal dropped into a kidney dish when Wrexham GP Arik Shaik syringed the man's ear. The 83-year-old man had been deaf for 20 years but was unaware of the cause. *Disability Now*, Mar 1995.

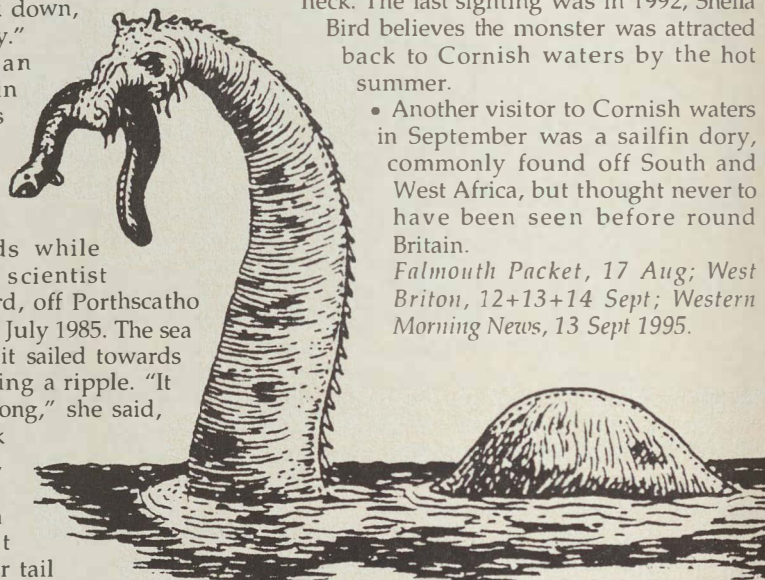
• **A BLACK PANTHER** sighting on Maui, Hawaii, the second in three months led to a fruitless police search. Permission was being sought from landowners to set traps. *USA Today*, 1 Mar 1995.

• **IRELAND'S TALLEST** MAN, 7ft 4in Mick Coulter, was unable to launch a non-smoking campaign in Ulster schools after he was sentenced to nine months' jail in the Irish Republic for stealing cigarettes from a petrol station in Lifford, County Donegal. *D.Telegraph*, 7 Mar 1995.

MORGAWR IS BACK

Morgawr is Cornish for "Sea Giant". This renowned monster was seen again off Rosemullion Head in early September by Gertrude Stevens of Golden Bank, Falmouth. It was no more than 60 yards away; most of it was below the surface, but Gertrude clearly saw a small head on a long neck, pointing in the direction of Falmouth. The head moved up and down. The creature was at least 20 feet long, with a conical body narrowing towards the tail and a dark yellowish green. "The tail was broad and flat," she said, "like a flat pear shape. I watched it for at least a minute, then it sank down, tail first, very quickly."

Sheila Bird, an author who lives in Falmouth, was delighted to hear of the latest sighting. She saw Morgawr at a distance of 200 yards while walking with her scientist brother, Dr Eric Bird, off Porthscatho on the evening of 10 July 1985. The sea was very calm and it sailed towards them, scarcely making a ripple. "It was about 20 feet long," she said, "with slender neck and small head, moving in a swan-like manner, with head held high." It had a long muscular tail visible just below the surface. They watched the creature for several minutes before it sub-



An impression of the Scott/Riley monster of 1975 from a booklet, *Morgawr, the Monster of Falmouth Bay*, by A. Mawnan-Peller (c1977)

merged. She said it didn't dive, but dropped vertically without leaving a ripple.

Carrie Ham, 86, of Helford Passage, had a sighting that same year. Looking out her window, she spotted what she took to be an overturned boat in the Helford River. Suddenly what looked like a long arm shaking something shot out of the water. It was the head and neck.

One of the most celebrated sightings was by Falmouth fisherman George Vinnicombe in 1976. He spotted what he also thought was an upturned boat about 30 miles off the Lizard before he, too, saw the head and neck. The last sighting was in 1992; Sheila Bird believes the monster was attracted back to Cornish waters by the hot summer.

• Another visitor to Cornish waters in September was a sailfin dory, commonly found off South and West Africa, but thought never to have been seen before round Britain.

Falmouth Packet, 17 Aug; *West Briton*, 12+13+14 Sept; *Western Morning News*, 13 Sept 1995.

THE LOCH NESS MOANER

On 28 July this year, mysterious "grunts" were heard 450ft below the surface of Loch Ness by Bill Bolton, one of a team of scientists who have been charting the loch for two years, and a group of five tourists who were with him aboard a mini-submarine close to the village of Abriachan on the west bank.

"We first heard the noises in the same area a few weeks ago and ignored them," said Mr Bolton. "On three or four separate occasions we heard them in an area of about a square mile."

The sounds were detected by the submarine's transducers.

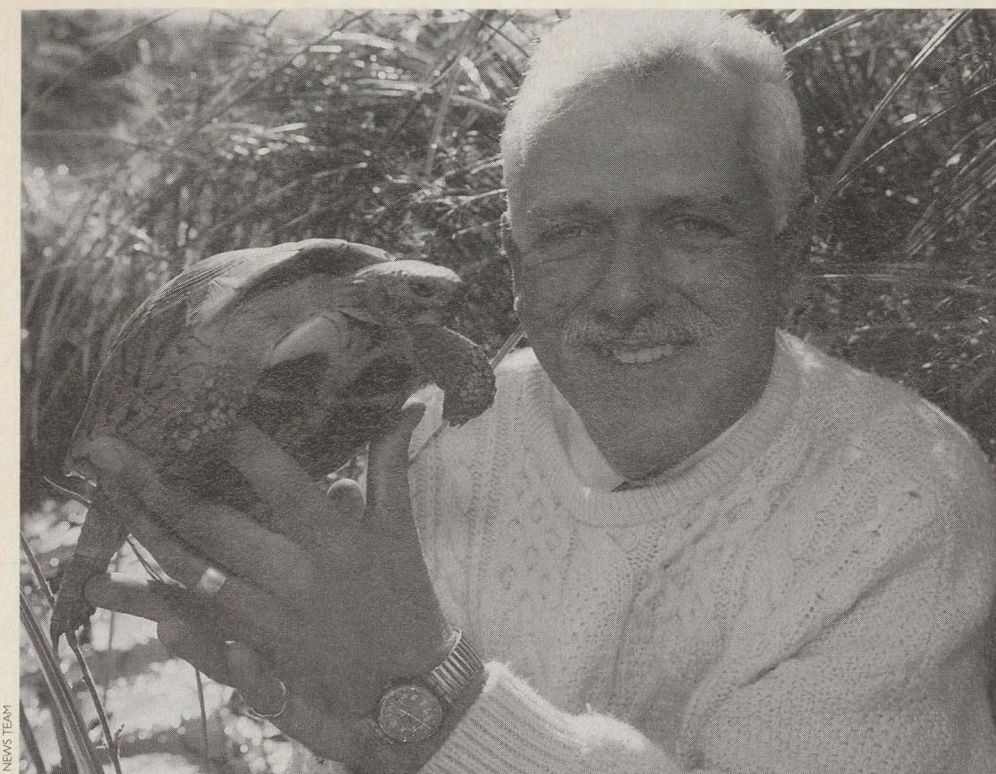
Allan Whitfield, another member of the scientific team, said: "I have frequently heard the calls of sea mammals. Dolphins make a chattering sound while whales make a noise which is long and

high-pitched. This was more like a grunt - a very deep grunt... Perhaps the sounds are the monster's mating call."

On 12 April, sonar on the *Royal Scot* picked up a moving object 32ft down during a sweep of Loch Dochfour at the north end of Loch Ness. Its size was difficult to estimate. The loch is small and shallow and is used by migratory fish swimming to Loch Ness. Adrian Shine, leader of the Loch Ness Project, said it was the first time Loch Dochfour had been linked to the Nessie legend.

The Loch Ness submarine makes trips from its lochside base at the Clansman hotel near Drumnadrochit. For reservations, ring 01456 450706. *Aberdeen Express & Journal*, 14 April + 29 July; *D.Express*, 29 July; *Sunday Telegraph*, *Independent on Sunday*, 30 July 1995.

THE GREAT TREK



Malcolm Edwards is reunited with Chester the tortoise after 35 years on the run.

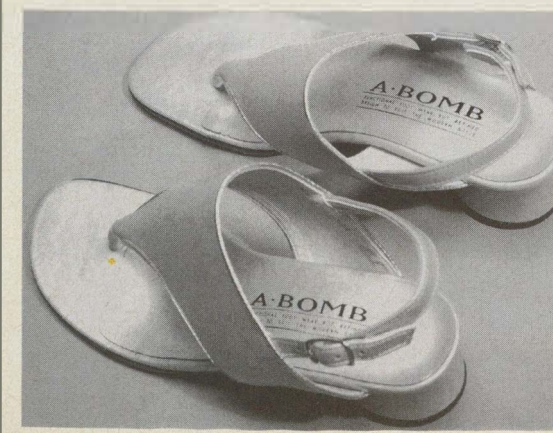
Chester the tortoise was bought for eight-year-old Malcolm Edwards in 1960. The 10-year-old tortoise joined a small menagerie in the village of Lyde, Herefordshire. To make Chester easier to spot in the grass, Malcolm's father painted a white mark on his shell. Even so, the tortoise escaped.

This September, Malcolm's neighbour Flossie Masshder found a mud-covered creature crawling along a grass verge near the village church. Malcolm, who still lives in his boyhood home, recognised the faded white paint mark on his pet's shell. In 35

years, Chester had travelled about 750 yards - across to the rough copse, round to the bus stop and up to the church. There was one possible sighting, 18 years ago, but Malcolm eventually accepted that his pet was dead.

George Cooper, the vet who examined Chester, said: "He could easily have survived all those years just living in local woodland. He would have had food in abundance, including dandelions, fruit, grass and vegetables." *D.Telegraph*, 29 Sept 1995.

EXPLOSIVE FOOTWEAR



These women's sandals, in jazzy neon colours, are part of the A-Bomb range created by Mode et Jacomo, a Tokyo design company. It also produces A-Bomb bags and fashion accessories.

"A-Bomb stands for atomic bomb," said Miyuki Kamiya, the firm's public relations officer, "but I was also told that it could mean 'cute' in English." She had heard that some stores in Hiroshima had expressed reluctance to market A-Bomb items, but she didn't know if any retailers had actually refused to do so. *Daily Yomiuri*, 6 Sept 1995.

SIDELINES

• **AN IRANIAN** proclaiming himself the "messenger of God" was sentenced to death in the United Arab Emirates in September. Hassan Gholam Hussein Dana, 35, was convicted of apostasy by the Sharia (Islamic) criminal court of Sharjah, one of the seven emirates in the UAE. [AFP] 5 Sept 1995.

• **THE TEETH** of almost all the children in the western Ukrainian village of Sosnivka, 10 miles north of Kiev, are disintegrating. First the teeth lose their enamel coating, then they turn yellow and develop brown stains before crumbling into pieces. Dentists were alarmed and said they had never seen anything like it before. *Rockland (NY) Journal-News*, 16 Aug 1995.

• **SHOKO ASAHARA**, the imprisoned leader of the Japanese Aum doomsday cult, was a avid collector of pubic hair. Asahara, accused of the sarin nerve gas murders on Tokyo's underground railway system, got the hair from some of the 30 or 40 women followers with whom he slept, according to the *Nikkan Sports* newspaper. *Northern Echo*, 14 Sept 1995.

• **AN INQUEST** in Southwark, London, was told that a fit man of 24 was found to have his stomach, pancreas, colon and spleen in his left chest rather than his abdomen. He died unexpectedly in June. *Northern Echo*, 14 Sept 1995.

• **WUSINATU WURAOLA** ABAYOMI, a Nigerian woman of 65, has given birth to a baby girl, her first child since she married 40 years earlier, according to a national television report. A resident of Ojota, on the outskirts of Lagos, she had the baby in a private hospital where both orthodox and traditional medicine is practised. *Times of Oman*, 6 Feb 1995.

• **GAS ENGINEERS** were called out three times in Nailsea, near Bristol, on 3 July to investigate a garlic-like mystery smell. It became so strong that toddlers at a playgroup were evacuated and a sports centre closed. The origin of the smell could not be determined. *Bristol Eve. Post*, 5 July 1995.

THAT'S NO LADY, THAT'S MY WIFE



Felix Urioste's student card.

A missing person report filed by Bruce Jensen in Bountiful, Utah, last April led to the unmasking of his 'wife' as a man called Felix Urioste who had defrauded Jensen of \$40-60,000 during their marriage of three and a half years.

The deception unravelled in May when Urioste, 34, was pulled over for speeding in Nevada and police found 33 credit cards and other identification in 19 different names, as well as keys to four hospitals in Salt Lake City. At the time, he was travelling as a man with an 18-year-old male companion. Police later established that he had enrolled as a female student at the University of Utah and had worked as a doctor in the four Salt Lake hospitals, alternating between male and female aliases.

Jensen, 39, was a lab technician at University Hospital, Salt Lake City, in September 1991 when he met Urioste, or "Leasa Bibianna Herrera", a female doctor with a "Cleopatra-style" wig and heavy make-up. According to Urioste's family, he had run

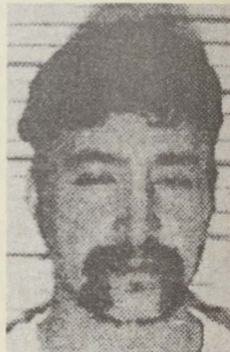
away from home at 13 and told them at 17 that he had a sex-change operation, after which they referred to him as a female.

Urioste told Jensen that he was an Israeli disowned by his parents for marrying a non-Jew, and had later joined the Mormons. After a single sexual encounter, he said he was pregnant with twins and Jensen felt morally obliged to give the children a father. They were married in December 1991. Several months later, Urioste claimed to have cancer and said that the twins were stillborn. He was able to pull off the deception because Jensen never saw him naked and the marriage was essentially celibate.

The couple were married in the Mormon church and Jensen was widely respected for the care he gave his "cancer-stricken" wife while working two jobs. Urioste fled the marriage in April, saying he was going to New York for cancer treatments. In reality, he had started wavering in his intention to complete sex-change

surgery. He had had his testicles but not his penis removed and was taking female hormones that gave him slight breasts. He stopped taking the hormones in the spring; at the time of the arrest, he had a thick moustache.

After the imposture was exposed, Jensen sought an annulment, citing irreconcilable differences (not to mention unnatural similarities). Confused, embarrassed and broke, he planned to return to his native Wyoming and "crawl in a hole for a few years and not let anyone within rifle range". *Ogden (UT) Standard-Examiner*, 12+21 July; *Meriden (CT) Record-Journal*, 14 July; [AP] 14 July 1995.



Urioste after his arrest in Nevada.

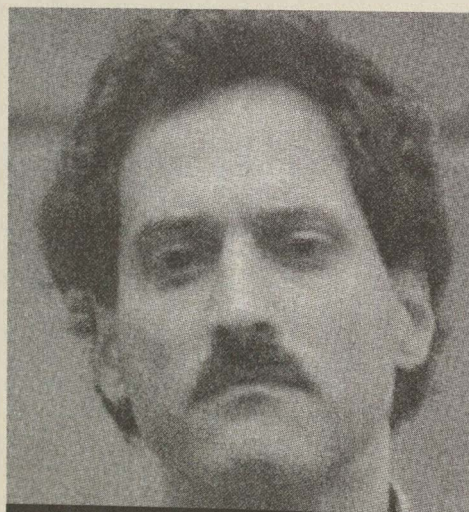
WOMAN SLAUGHTERED AFTER PASTA ROW

Richard H. Rosenthal, 40, an insurance executive living in the posh Boston suburb of Framingham, was recently promoted and became a father; but he behaved out of character on 29 August. On that day, a bloody trail led police from his four-bedroom, \$300,000 home to the woods nearby where they found the body of Laura Jane, 34, his wife of four years.

She had been slashed from neck to navel and her internal organs were skewered on an 18in wooden stake about 30ft away in a nearby garden.

Her face had been pummelled with a large rock, leaving her so disfigured that she was listed as "Jane Doe" (an American equivalent of Joe Bloggs) on Rosenthal's arrest report.

Under investigation, Rosenthal told police: "I had an argument... I overcooked the ziti [a pasta dish]". He



Richard H. Rosenthal.

appeared rational, but showed no emotion and referred to his late wife as the "unknown victim". At one point, he asked: "Is this a big case?"

The couple had no history of violence. Their baby daughter, Marla, was unharmed and placed in state custody. *New York Post*, 30 Aug; *Hackensack (NJ) Record*, 31 Aug 1995.

• There was another tragedy over pasta in Buenos Aires earlier in the year. Sergio Noir, 21, a butcher, was dining with his fiancée's family. He was asked to leave the table during Sunday lunch after telling his fiancée's mother she had ruined a pasta dish by letting it boil too long. The father then

slapped his daughter - Noir's fiancée - and refused to let her leave the house with Noir. At that point the enraged young man stabbed the father to death. [AP] 1 Mar 1995.

WELL, IT DOESN'T SMELL LIKE RAIN...

The clouds have had more than a silver lining for the chosen few around the world

FROM A GREAT HEIGHT...

A brown shower landed on spectators at an East of Scotland tournament at Craiglockhart Tennis Club, Colinton, Edinburgh, in August.

John Paterson said: "I was sitting on the grass watching the tennis when I heard a loud slap. I looked around and my wife Jane's back and arms were covered in human excrement. Several other people sitting near her were covered too. The smell was unbearable - no one would go near them."

At first, the Edinburgh-to-Birmingham shuttle which was passing overhead at the time, was blamed; but stringent checks of the aircraft's sewage tanks ruled this out. Edinburgh airport said the shower could not have come from an aircraft. Edinburgh District Council, which confirmed that the faeces were human, could offer no alternative explanation and environmental health officers were no nearer a solution more than a month later. *Edinburgh Eve. News*, 11 Aug, 16 Sept 1995.

A LOAD OF BALLS

Dorothy Haywood was at home in West Knoxville, Tennessee, on 28 August. "I heard noises about 8.15 or so Monday night, but didn't notice anything until my son ran over a tennis ball in the driveway," she said. "We turned on the porch light; the back yard was full of them." She counted 60 to 70 fuzzy yellow balls in her back yard, 10 or so in the alleyway behind her house and several in neighbouring yards on Denson Avenue.

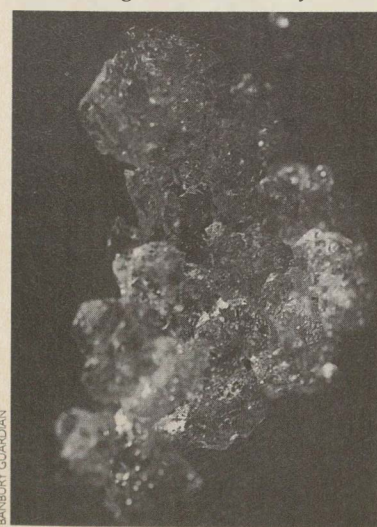
"The only way I can explain this is that they were somehow dropped from a plane," she said. "They're all numbered, Penn 1, Wilson 4... I thought maybe I'd won some type of contest."

Her next-door-neighbour Billie Lenear said that her daughter picked up about four balls from their yard, but had more to collect.

Police spokesman Foster Arnett Jr suggested: "It sounds like a prank played by some kids." No evidence for this was offered in the news report from *The Knoxville News-Sentinel* (20 Aug 1995), sent to FT by Bishop Victor Mar Michael Herron, Vicar General of the Antiochian Catholic Church in America.

JELLY ROLLS OUT OF THE HEAVENS

A clear jelly-like substance, cold to the touch, was discovered in a garden in Horley, Oxfordshire, on 23 September.



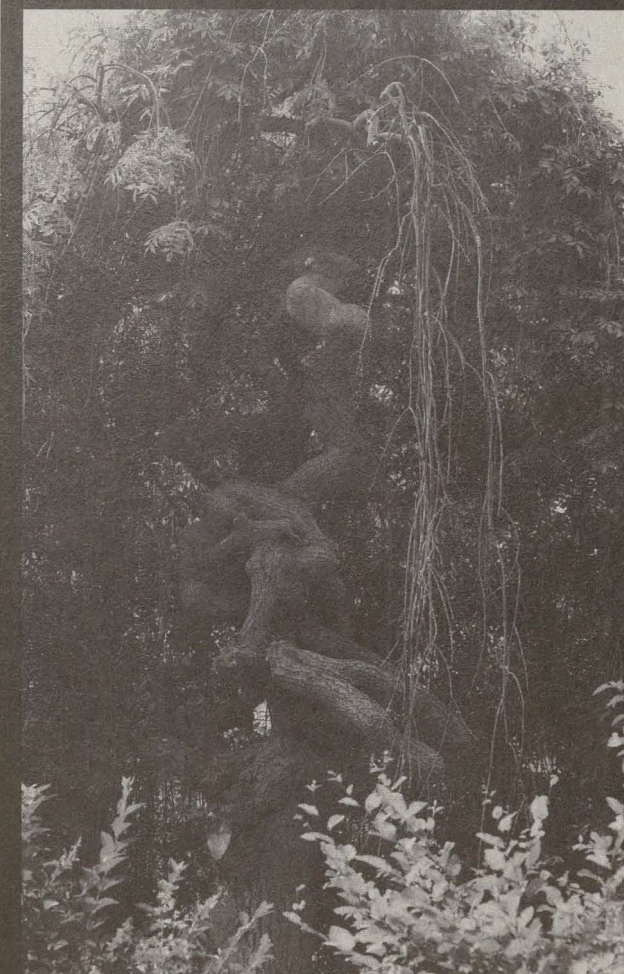
The finder, who wants to remain anonymous, said: "I don't know what it is, but if I had scraped it all up, there would have been enough to fill a kettle."

A friend, Ian Lawson of Banbury, who was visiting at the time, said: "It has obviously come from the sky. Maybe it is some form of refrigeration substance used on aircraft." No more of the substance to be found in neighbouring gardens. *Banbury Citizen*, 29 Sept 1995.

ANYONE FOR TENNERS?

Delighted villagers grabbed handfuls of money when £10 notes fluttered out of the sky over Kidlington, Oxfordshire, on 20 February. Police admitted they were baffled by the windfall. At 6am on 24 March, a motorist saw clouds of greenbacks floating across the four-lane McClellan Highway in East Boston, Massachusetts. Police recovered \$7,070 in various denomination bills, but had no idea how much was pocketed by the public. By the following morning, no one had called the police station to claim the money. *Western Morning News*, 21 Feb; *Boston (MA) Herald*, 25 Mar, [AP] 26 Mar 1995.

SIMULACRA CORNER



Allan Brooks took this picture of an orgy going on in a tree. The tree is situated in the garden of what was possibly once the gatehouse of Ormsby Hall in Ormsby, Middlesbrough, Cleveland.

We are always glad to receive pictures of spontaneous forms and figures, or any curious images. Send them to the editorial address and we'll pay a fiver or ten dollars for any we use.

FANCY MEETING YOU HERE



Reunited: Cookie Richardson with her new-found brother James Austin.

James Austin and Yvette (Cookie) Richardson worked side by side for two years at Philadelphia's main post office before discovering that they were brother and sister. Their parents had separated 33 years earlier, when James was seven months old. He was raised by his paternal grandparents in North Philadelphia while Yvette stayed with her mother in South Philadelphia. They went to school within blocks of each other, both studied accounting and both ending up on the 4pm shift at the post office, which has 4,100 employees.

Their reunion was brought about last June by shop steward Barrie Bowens. Austin had told her that his father died young and that he never knew his mother. Bowens asked for his mother's name and he said Veronica Potter – which Bowens knew was the name of Richardson's mother. She broke the news to Richardson, who then noticed the stunning resemblance between her co-worker and an old picture of her father. [AP] 4 Aug 1995.

A SEA OF COINCIDENCES

Strange coincidences, such as meeting someone with the same name or birthday, are more common than most of us think, according to a study by Robert Matthews, a visiting research fellow at Aston University, Birmingham, and psychologist Dr Susan Blackmore. The study, published recently in the journal *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, says that few people have any clear grasp of probability, making them prone to give a paranormal explanation to an apparently strange event.

The researchers asked 120 people to answer a simple question: How many randomly chosen people must be brought together for at least an even chance that two of them will share a common trait, such as a star sign, a birthday, or having gone to the same secondary school?

There are 12 star signs, 365 days in the year and 5,000 secondary schools in England. Five people are needed to give 50:50 odds of sharing a star sign, just 23 are needed to give the same odds of sharing a birthday and only 85 to

give the same odds of having been to the same secondary school.

Many people, presented with the question about schools, simply divide the number of schools by two and suggest that 2,500 people would have to be present; but this is 30 times greater than the necessary minimum. The reason is that these coincidences don't need a match with a specific school.

All that is being asked is that among all the possible pairings that can be made among all the people present, two will be the same.

"It's not surprising we're poor at assessing coincidences," said Dr Blackmore. "Humans typically acquire skill at something by constant practice, but we don't go around all day deliberately seeking out coincidences. If we did, we'd soon realise we live in a sea of them and would be far less surprised when they popped up." *Times*. D.Telegraph, Independent, 29 Aug 1995.

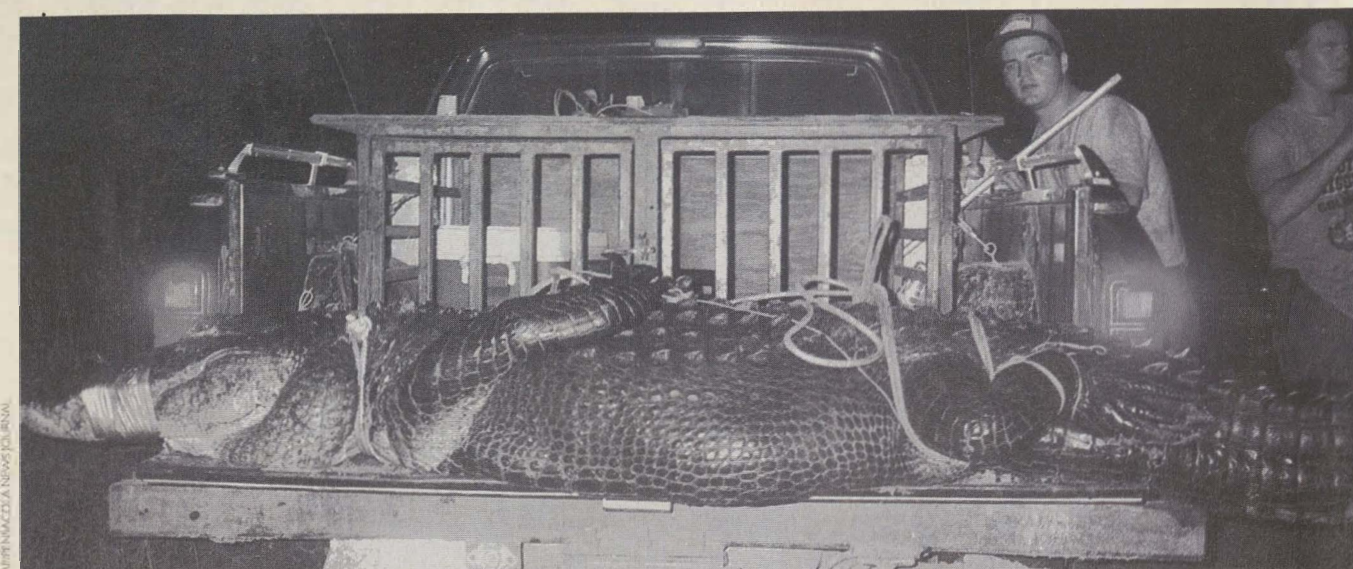
CLOSE FAMILY

Tony Munden, 26, of Clevedon Road, Weston-super-Mare, discovered he had two half-sisters after receiving a letter from his long-lost mother last Christmas. A trail of enquiry ended at the house next door, where his half-sister Lorraine, 23, was living. Their bedroom windows face each other 15ft apart and a waist-high stone wall is all that separates the front gardens. The pair had been neighbours for three months without knowing of each other's existence.

Their mother Brenda, 47, split up with Tony's father when Tony was 18 months old. She emigrated to South Africa with her daughters Lorraine and Paula from a second failed marriage and now lives near Johannesburg with her third husband, Derek, 35, and younger daughter, Paula, 21.

Tony, a self-employed labourer, said: "I've had to look after myself ever since my father left me when I was 10 and I was taken into care. Now at last I have something to look forward to and family to care about." *Bristol Eve. Post*, 10 April 1995.

SEE YOU LATER, ALLIGATOR



Valuable hunting dogs have been disappearing in the Blackwater River State Forest near Pensacola, Florida, for nearly 20 years and owners had assumed that thieves had taken them for resale. Then last August Rufus Godwin's hunting dog, Flojo, vanished near Coldwater Creek and he followed signals from the electronic tagging device on her collar.

James Sauls, who was with Godwin, also received signals from a collar worn by a dog he had last seen several weeks earlier. There was another response from a third collar that had been on another friend's dog. Their signals led them to a 500lb alligator

lurking in a hole. The 11ft reptile, which had turned a secluded game trail into his private fast-food restaurant, was captured on 15 August.

During the struggle, it spat out Flojo's tracking collar and half of the dog was found in the stomach, which also contained six other collars including one from a dog that disappeared 14 years ago. One hunter estimated that up to 25 hunting dogs had disappeared in the swamp in the last two decades. The alligator was thought to be about 50 years old. [R] 29 Aug; D.Telegraph, 30 Aug 1995.

BUTTERFLY KISS-OFF

The celebrated monarch butterfly migration in Northern California will be a sad trickle this year with the numbers of butterflies down to the lowest in living memory. Arthur Shapiro, an entomologist at the University of California at Davis, said he had never seen so few butterflies. He estimated populations were down to about 10 per cent.

The decline may be of disaster proportions: at the heart of the area where the monarchs winter, the Ardenwood Historic Farm in Fremont, naturalist Jan Southworth found that the usual count of around 12,000 was down to just one per cent. Naturalists agree that the large number of storms during the winter of 1994/5 was to blame. Drenched vegetation bred fungal and bacterial diseases at the time the pupae were developing. Of the few that hatched, most couldn't fly or mate or lay eggs before the next storm put an end to them. [AP] NY Times, 1 April 1995.

LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER

A herd of sheep committed mass suicide in a lake in Inner Mongolia on 17 July, refusing to return to shore despite frantic efforts by their Chinese shepherd to save them. Two goats with an apparent death wish jumped into the 1.5-metre deep water, prompting the rest to follow. After a three-hour rescue aided by 20 herdsman, the shepherd succeeded in saving 281 sheep while the other 249 animals, including 206 goats, drowned. Some of the rescued animals tried to jump back in. Veterinary experts had no explanation for this unusual behaviour and an inquiry was planned. *Daily Yomiuri* (Japan), *Le Matin* (Benin), 4 Aug 1995.

CHINESE UFOs

People in three different parts of Guangxi province in China claimed to have seen UFOs at the same time, according to the semi-official China News Service. On the night of 26 July, dozens of workers saw a UFO three metres in diameter, rising 1,500 to 2,000 metres from the ground just northwest of a coalmining area in Guangxi's Huanjiang county.

"The shape of the object was just like the sun perched on top of a crescent moon," the report said. "As it ascended, the size of the object grew gradually smaller while its glow faded. After approximately seven minutes, it disappeared completely."

At about the same time, a government official in Tian'e county witnessed a "strange star" in the sky, saying it was about the same size as the moon. "Its glow was similar to that of the moon, but it did not shine towards the ground," the man said. The 'strange star' then rose in the air and vanished after two minutes.

Meanwhile, residents of Yizhou prefecture and Locheng county reported seeing a similar object. They said it appeared "in the form of a silvery halo or a sun perched on top of a crescent moon" and shone like the lights of a car. The object soon disappeared. [UPI] South China Morning Post, 9 Aug 1995.

ANIMAL SABOTEURS

Those pesky critters have been at it again

• The launch of the space shuttle *Discovery* was delayed from 8 June to 13 July when NASA discovered that two woodpeckers had made 135 holes, up to 4in in diameter, in the fuel tank's insulating foam. Technicians had to move the shuttle from the launch pad so that they could patch up all the holes, at a cost of nearly \$100,000. The Kennedy Space Center is in a wildlife refuge. When the delayed countdown commenced, ground controllers serenaded the astronauts with Woody Woodpecker's trademark snicker. [AP] 3 June, 11 July 1995.

• The Daya Bay nuclear power plant in Shenzhen, China, was opened in February 1994 and supplies much of Hong Kong's electricity.

By November, however, it was faced with a major threat to safety as white ants went on the rampage, chewing through everything in sight. The ants had been busy in Shenzhen, eating banknotes, invading a reservoir, closing an electronics factory and blacking out a hotel. *South China Morning Post*, 10 Nov 1994.

• A porcupine in South Africa chomped through a bunch of buried fibre optic cables, cutting off a large number of telephones in the Vereeniging area south of Johannesburg. A trail of fragments led engineers to the porcupine's lair. *Ivoir Soir (Ivory Coast)*, 14 Feb 1995.



• A squirrel wiped out power to Derby City Hospital and more than 1,100 houses when it climbed a power line and touched an 11,000-volt cable in October 1994. Two months later, a possum caused a huge blackout for an hour on Brisbane's north side by crawling into a substation and shorting a 110 kilovolt line. *Sussex Eve. Argus*, 29 Oct; *Brisbane Sunday Mail*, 11 Dec 1994.

WORMS ON THE RUN

Hope of stemming the invasion of British soil by New Zealand flatworms [see FT78:17] is being pinned on the larvae of some common British beetles. This unlikely Home Guard was discovered by accident during a study of the flatworms, which have no known predator in this country – until now, that is.

Worms were stained red and green and released into a controlled allotment by scientists at the Institute of Cell, Animal and Population Biology at Edinburgh University. Dr Derek Cosens commented: "We were surprised later to find beetle larvae that had also turned red and green, which meant that they must have eaten the flatworms." Andrew Halstead, chief entomologist of the Royal Horticultural Society's garden at Wisley in Surrey, greeted the news cautiously. "We do not know how effective the beetle will have a choice of many other things to eat." *The Times*, 9 June 1995.

ARCHIVE GEMS 13: OSTRICH EGG FOUND ON GUERNSEY



On 27 June 1988, biology teacher Rachel Rabey came across a giant egg while walking near the Le Catiorec dolmen at St Saviour's in Guernsey. She took it to the zoo, where it was identified as an ostrich egg. The zoo had no ostriches, and neither did anyone else on the island. There was tar on the egg, which had been broken open with some care. The yolk was still intact and was still pliable, suggesting that it had spent some time in salt water. The origin of the egg remained a mystery. *Guernsey Eve. Press*, 29 June 1988.

THAR SHE BLOWS

An extremely rare albino whale was spotted again off Cape Byron in northern New South Wales on 16 July after a three-month absence. The obsessive search for this modern-day Moby Dick is led by conservationist David Paton rather than the mad Captain Ahab. Paton, the assistant district manager of Lismore's National Parks and Wildlife Service, said the white humpback has now been seen four times.

The initial sighting was made off Cape Byron in 1991 by Paul Hodda, president of the Australian Whale Conservation Society. It was treated with scepticism because an albino humpback was unheard of; a normal humpback has a dark dorsal area and a light-coloured underbelly.

Paton said that he expected the whale would continue its migration north from Antarctica towards the Whitsunday area in Queensland. [AP], *Western Daily Press*, 22 July 1995.

ONE BLOODY GRAVE

On 2 August, the body of Al Adamson, famed for *Five Bloody Graves* and countless other schlock-horror B-features, was found buried beneath a Jacuzzi inside his house in the Californian desert at Indio. He was 66 and had been missing for five weeks. Police issued a murder warrant for a contractor who had been living in the house, 150 miles southeast of Los Angeles, while he remodelled it.

Albert Victor Adamson was born in Hollywood in 1929, the son of a New Zealander who had been a bit-player in early Westerns.

With his wooden dialogue and wobbly scenery, he rivalled Ed Wood for the title of worst film director in the world. Perhaps he should be remembered as a pioneer of camp jokiness in the horror genre: in *Dracula's Castle* (1967), John Carradine looks at a bottle of blood and says: "Type double-O positive – a very good year". With his mixture of frenetic action, fetishistic sex and comic strip gore, Adamson won a cult following in the 1970s. He once boasted that he "put more on the screen for less money than anybody".

His first major success was the biker movie *Satan's Sadists*



"The drinks are on me." A scene from Al Adamson's *The Female Bunch*

(1969), followed by over 30 others such as *Horror of the Blood Monsters* and *Brain of Blood*. He was a past-master at recycling his own work: *Psycho a-Go Go* (1965), for instance, was originally shot as *Echo of Terror*; new scenes of Carradine as a mad scientist were added to turn the thriller into a science fiction movie called *The Fiend with the Electronic Brain*. This was re-released, in a gorier version, as *Blood of Ghastly Horror*. The film also appeared as *The Man with the Synthetic Brain*.

His *Dracula* vs. *Frankenstein* (1969), with

a dying Lon Chaney as Groton the Mad Zombie, played drive-ins for more than a decade. It began life as *The Blood Seekers*, a saga of mad science and acid-tripping hippies. The title monsters were worked into the plot as an afterthought.

Some of his desert-shot projects, including the pornographic Western *Lash Of Lust* and the biker babe picture, *The Female Bunch*, were filmed at the Spahn Ranch, then Charles Manson's hang-out. It has long been rumoured that Manson family followers appeared as extras. *Guardian, Int. Herald Tribune*, 9 Aug; *D.Telegraph*, 9+11 Aug 1995.

SEX SIMBA

A Virginia-based anti-abortion outfit called the American Life League has called for video cassettes of Disney's cartoon *The Lion King* to be withdrawn from sale. League spokesman Rodney Miller said that a four-year-old boy had seen the letters "S-E-X" take form one after the other in a cloud of dust raised by Simba, the lion, when he jumps off a cliff. The observation was reported to the League by the boy's aunt. "It's kind of iffy," said Mr Miller. "Some people see a cloud, kind of wavy lines. It's hard to see even if you slow it down."

With a shaky grasp of English, Disney spokesman Rick Rhoades said that what appeared to be a word was "nothing more than a perception" and that there were no plans to withdraw the video. "We can guarantee there's no symbolism," he blustered.

The American Life League also alleges that there are risqué scenes in two other Disney feature cartoons: in *Aladdin*, there is an audible message "Good teenagers, take off your clothes" and in *The Little Mermaid* a man at a wedding becomes visibly sexually aroused. *New York Times*, 2 Sept; [AP] 5 Sept 1995.

HIGHWAY TO HELL

Residents along Route 666 believe the fact that the road bears the Number of the Beast of Revelations explains its plague of death and destruction. The road runs 200 miles from Monticello in Utah's Mormon country, through the sagelands of southern Colorado and on to Gallup, New Mexico. There are a large number of drink-drive and hit-and-run killings and the road even has its own serial killer – the Mad Trucker, who police suspect runs people over for sport. In Oliver Stone's bloodfest *Natural Born Killers*, psychopaths Mickey and Mallory kill 52 people along Route 666.

It was road engineers in the 1930s who called the highway Route 666 as the sixth to cross fabled Route 66 between Chicago and Los Angeles. Now a coalition of Bible-belters and Navajo Indians – whose reservation is split by the road – want the name changed. The number is double trouble for the Navajos: not only are many of them literalist Christians, but in traditional belief the number six is considered evil. Navajo spokesman William Lee blamed the road for the popularity of devil worship among local teens and the ritual sacrifice of dogs and cats.

Sceptics blame the accidents on poor lighting, narrow bends and the fact that the road links the reservation, where alcohol is banned, with the nearest bars in Gallup. *Wall Street Journal*, 3 Aug; *Guardian*, 7 Aug 1995.

IT'S ALL IN THE LAP

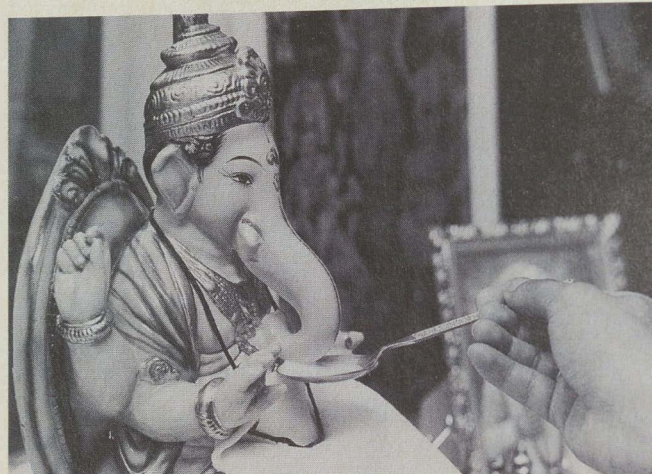
Was a prominent Indian godman responsible for the fastest-spreading religious rumour in history?

For three days in September, the world's Hindus were gripped by devotional frenzy. On Thursday, 21 September, Delhi and much of the rest of northern India ran short of milk after rumours that statues of Hindu gods were drinking it. "The gods have come down to Earth to solve all our problems," said one woman, voicing the optimism of thousands. The Indian capital was in chaos as crowds armed with buckets, bowls and spoons rushed to temples of Shiva, his elephant-headed son Ganesh and his wife Parvati. The government shut down for half a day, followed by the stock exchanges in Bombay and Delhi. Police waved bamboo staves to subdue the crowds, which included Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Muslims. Senior Indian journalists wrote personal accounts of visiting temples to debunk the "miracle" and coming out "amazed and humbled".

Statues of Hindu gods are 'fed' every day, although usually they "consume" only the immaterial part of the offerings. The remainder is fed to worshippers or given to the poor. In the larger temples, the sacred images are 'woken' at dawn, washed and dressed in silk, placed on a throne in the shrine room and offered flowers, incense and light. They are fed, fanned and have music played to them; if the budget allows, dancing girls perform before them. This time of the year was the season of *pitri bhaksh* when the devout offered milk for the souls of their ancestors; but the actual consumption of milk by the idols seems to be unprecedented, as indeed was the speed with which it spread around the world, aided in part by the Internet.

MILK-DRINKING RUMOUR GOES GLOBAL

By the end of Thursday, the phenomenon had spread to Calcutta, Madras and round the world. In Singapore, which has an Indian community of more than 200,000, television stations showed long queues of people with milk cartons outside temples. More than 800 people converged on a Hindu temple in Happy Valley on Hong Kong Island. Prakesh Sharma, the local priest, said that for several hours the gods didn't drink; then a girl of eight offered milk to a statue of Krishna. Some worshippers were so astonished at the speed with which the cartons of milk disappeared there after that they ran to fetch four-litre bottles and ladles. A temple official claimed that a small silver statue of Ganesh had drunk 20 litres, and the priests said that Krishna and Brahma were also drinking. There were also reports of milk-



A statue of Ganesh being spoonfed milk in a private south London house on Sunday, 24 September. The photographer, Niall O'Mara, offered milk himself to the statue, and thought that the speed at which it disappeared could not be explained by absorption. He saw the milk flowing along the underside of the glazed trunk to where it joined the body (not the mouth).

drinking idols in Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Dubai, Kenya, Germany, Bangkok, Brisbane, Toronto, New York, Jersey City and across Britain.

Priests in the Punjab claimed the "miracle" had been discovered accidentally. According to Pandit Chaman Prakash, head of the Khampur Shiv Mandir temple in Chandigarh, a young woman approached him before sunrise on Thursday, saying her sister had dreamed that Ganesh would descend to drink milk at 4am. Grumbling, he unbolted the temple doors and then gaped as the 18in high statue sucked milk from a spoon. There was even a rumour that an ele-

phant-headed boy, the possible reincarnation of Ganesh, had been born that day in a Punjab town.

News of another 'spontaneous' happening in the nearby city of Ludhiana was the first to reach Britain. Savitri Devi Whig, trustee of the Ram temple in King Street, Southall, west London, was awoken by a telephone call at 4am on Thursday. "It was one of my in-laws in Ludhiana, to say they had received a call from their priest. He said that at 2am a big bell in the temple had chimed. Thinking the deity was hungry, he offered milk in his hand to Ganesh. He said we should try it in our temple. At 7am we came to the temple and tried. A few people were successful and the milk vanished when it was offered."

The nearby Vishwa temple in Lady Margaret Road, Southall, became the main focus of media attention on Thursday when 10,000 Hindus gathered as a result of a 6am call from Delhi. The local Gateway supermarket sold out of its stock of 28,000 pints in the morning.

The first offering was made at 10.30am, when Ram Prakash Verma, secretary of the temple's trustees, gave a tablespoon of milk to a foot-high statue of Nandi, the bull which serves as Shiva's steed. "The spoon was empty in a fraction of a second," he said. Curiously, he didn't offer milk to Ganesh or the other statues. Other people did, but without success. Sceptics observed that Nandi was placed in a shallow pool of flowing water with its back to devotees, so the "miracle" could not be closely studied as two selected women proffered sips to its mouth.

In Southall's Shri Ram Mandir temple a bronze statue of a cobra, known as Shash Naag, began drinking milk. Large crowds also gathered outside temples in Liverpool, Birmingham, Leicester, Southampton, and around the country. At the Geeta Bhawan Temple in Withington, Greater Manchester, worshippers formed a queue at the altar where a

OF THE GODS

3in-high silver Ganesh was perched on a tray. A lot of milk disappeared up the god's trunk with only a few drops spilt on the tray. At Europe's biggest Hindu temple, the Swaminarayan temple in Neasden, north-west London, attendants turned away worshippers who arrived with milk. The temple's statue of Ganesh was closed to the public for most of the day. At the Hindu Cultural Society at Bradford, an idol refused to drink a spoonful of milk proffered by the priest.

By Friday, 22 September, most of the Hindu idols seemed to have drunk their fill. In New Delhi, the number of worshippers was way down from the previous day, even though the right-wing Hindu party which rules the capital had ordered an extra 26,455 gallons of milk, just in case. Nandi at the Vishwa temple in Southall stopped drinking milk at 1.36pm. One of the last statues to be sated in Britain was a marble Ganesh in Leeds which gave up at 11.45pm on Friday night, having supped four bowlfuls earlier that day. Devotees continued to queue up at various temples round Britain on Saturday, braving the pervasive smell of sour milk, and some were even rewarded with a idol drinking their offering, but the "miracle" was very patchy. On Sunday, the religious festival of *Navratri* began, celebrating the banishment of evil forces by the goddess Shera Wali Matha.

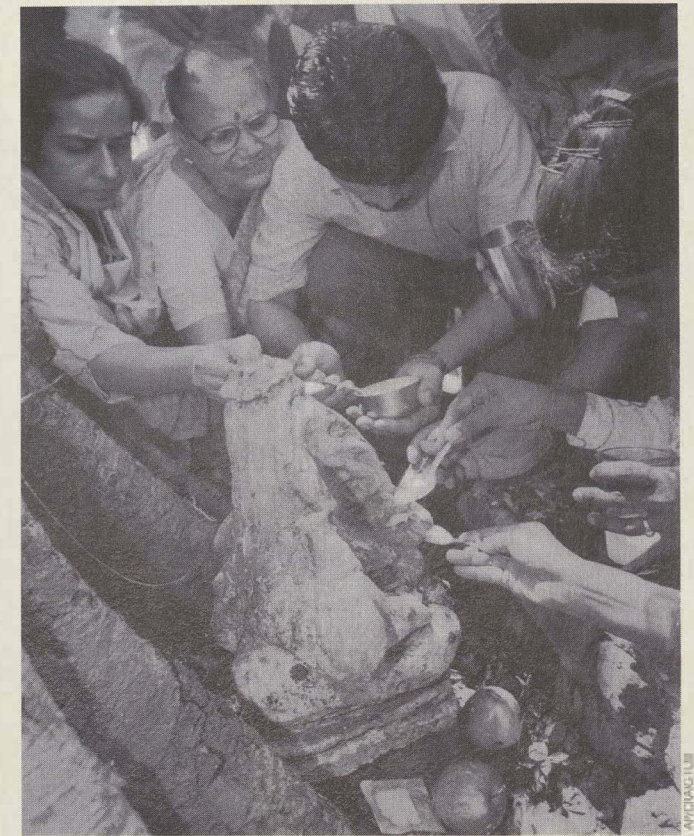
The phenomenon then started to expand outside the Hindu context. On Sunday, Karen Angelo, 31, of Runcorn, Cheshire, claimed that her 4ft statue of the Virgin Mary drank nine spoonfuls of milk; and not long after, another statue of the Blessed Virgin was doing the same in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur. According to one unsubstantiated report, a woman called Kumari Jyoti spoonfed alcohol to an idol of Ganesh somewhere in India. The World Hindu Council told her to apologise or face exile.

CAT LITTER AND SHADY POLITICS

To explain the milk-drinking, the rationalists invoked their old friend, capillary action, viewing the phenomenon as the "weeping Madonna" in reverse. Many kinds of stone, including marble, alabaster and sandstone, can absorb liquids quite fast; the surface of the liquid interacts with ultra-fine pores riddling the rock. Pink dye added to milk appeared down the front of an idol in one New Delhi temple. Absorption could be enhanced by hollow statues containing vermiculite (used in cat litters) or perlite, which could suck up several litres. Of course, many of the statues were tiny or made of solid metal and capillary action cannot account for the litres of milk they are said to have consumed.

Rikee Verma, writing in *The Times*, recounts a puzzling personal experience. He went up to his household altar after hearing the rumours. "I placed a spoonful of milk against a photograph of Ganesh and was astonished to find that within seconds half the spoon was empty. I checked to make sure the glass frame of the photograph was not wet. It was dry."

According to the Indian Rationalists' Association, a sinister conspiracy lay behind the whole milk-drinking saga. At 6pm on Wednesday, 20 September, sadhus (holy men) at Haridwar proclaimed through loudspeakers that, the following day, "Shiva's family will begin drinking milk." News of the impending miracle spread round northern



Feeding time for Ganesha at a temple in New Delhi

India during the night. The sadhus' motive, according to the rationalists, was to protect Chandraswami, a notorious godman allegedly implicated in the murder of prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 and accused of harbouring a gangster who had killed a police officer.

Dubbed the "greaseball guru", Chandraswami has influence with the current prime minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, and is the confidant of Elizabeth Taylor, Adnan Khashoggi and the Sultan of Brunei. Some of the Haridwar sadhus were seen the previous week in Delhi protesting against Chandraswami's arrest, ordered by Rajesh Pilot, Minister of State for Internal Security. Soon after issuing the arrest warrant, Pilot was exiled to the political wilderness as Minister for Forests.

Chandraswami is fighting accusations that he tried to recruit an Israeli mercenary to assassinate Gandhi during the 1991 election campaign. From his ornate mansion in Delhi, where he holds court sitting on a tiger skin, he is reported to have invoked Ganesh and had his message relayed to important temples. "Try and feed Ganesh," said one anonymous caller to the Birla temple in Delhi. "He's simply drinking the milk." But was the guru really responsible for the international feeding frenzy or was he merely riding a wave?

Independent, 21 Sept; *Times*, *D.Telegraph*, *Independent*, *Guardian*, *Sun*, 22+23 Sept; *Sunday Times*, *Sunday Telegraph*, *Independent on Sunday*, *Observer*, 24 Sept; *New York Daily News*, *Brisbane (Aust.) Sunday Mail*, 24 Sept; *Toronto Sun*, *Independent*, *Sun*, 25 Sept; *D.Telegraph*, 27 Sept 1995.

HOW TO GET BLOOD FROM A STONE

The Weeping Virgin of Civitavecchia [FT81:11] was placed in a rock-studded niche in the church of Sant'Agostino on 17 June. About 3,000 worshippers gathered for the statue's first public viewing since the controversy over its tears of blood last February. The Gregori family who own the statue had earlier refused to have their blood tested to see if it matched the male human blood on the statue, claiming that this would put their faith in doubt "by assertions of a medico-legal nature". They were under no legal obligation to do so. On 20 June, believers said the plaster Madonna had turned her head.

In the July edition of *Chemistry in Britain* (vol.31, no.7), Dr Luigi Garlaschelli, a chemistry researcher at the University of Pavia, explained one effective way to make a "bleeding" or "weeping" statue. "What is needed is a hollow statue made of porous material, such as plaster or ceramic," he wrote. "The icon must be glazed or painted with some sort of impermeable coating. If the statue is then filled up with a liquid [for instance through a tiny hole in the head], the porous material will absorb it [by capillary action], but the glazing will stop it from flowing out.

"If the glazing, however, is imperceptibly scratched away on or around the eyes, tear-like drops will leak out, as if materialising from thin air. If the cavity behind the eyes is small enough, once all the liquid has dripped out there are virtually no traces left in the icon. When I put it to the test, this trick proved to be very satisfactory, baffling all onlookers."

The only weeping Madonna recognised by the Roman Church is one in Syracuse, Sicily, in 1953. There were many eye-witnesses and a couple of amateur films showing tears appearing on the face. Garlaschelli was not allowed to inspect the glazing of the actual relic which is kept behind glass. He wrote: "A careful examination of an exact copy of this bas-relief (from the same manufacturer as the original) proved it to be made of glazed plaster, and to possess a cavity behind the face..."

A statue of the Madonna of Fatima began weeping what was thought to be blood in the town of Brunssum in southern Holland at 10.30pm on 27 June. The statue had been bought by Gerda and Jan Coumans five years earlier.



A rare photograph of a virgin in action. The weeping madonna of Brooklyn caught crying in 1984.

In the ensuing days, hundreds of people came to see it. A small amount of the "blood" was examined at the hospital laboratory in Heerlen.

It turned out to be resin which had held the eye in place and had melted in the heatwave of late June. The red/brown colouring was pigment from the eyeball itself. The same explanation scotched the "miracle" of the bleeding Madonna in Grangecon, County Wicklow, in May 1994 [FT79:15]. [AFP] 1 May; [R] 19 June; [Scripps Howard] 21 June; Volksrant (Netherlands), 1 July; Independent on Sunday, Sunday Telegraph, Sunday Express, 9 July 1995.

TEARS FOR VEGAS

In September, a statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe could be observed weeping in the backyard shrine of Pablo Covarrubias, behind a branch of 7-11 near the intersection of Las Vegas and Lake Mead Boulevards at 2033 Donna Street, Las Vegas. The tears started on 30 May 1993. Covarrubias's niece, Martha Saldivar, first saw the statue cry, but few believed her until Channel 8 TV news turned up and documented the event on video. The statue seems to weep only in the presence of Martha. When FT's Vegas correspondent Jeffrey Vallance asked why the Madonna cries, she declared: "Our Lady cries to bring the people of Las Vegas back to their faith!" The whole household has become devout.

Other witnessed wonders include the scent of roses and the statue turning and moving forward. A little angel under the statue has been seen getting a "greasy head". On 17 June 1993, a very windy day in Las Vegas, a Marian apparition slowly floated down from heaven in the form of a fine mist. Various miraculous healings are claimed, such as the disappearance of water on the brain and cancerous lesions. Vallance himself witnessed some tears of the Virgin, which were presented to him on a cotton ball. *Las Vegas Weekly*, 6 Sept 1995.



The weeping Virgin of Guadalupe at home in Las Vegas.

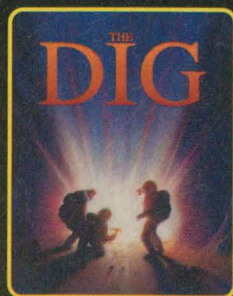
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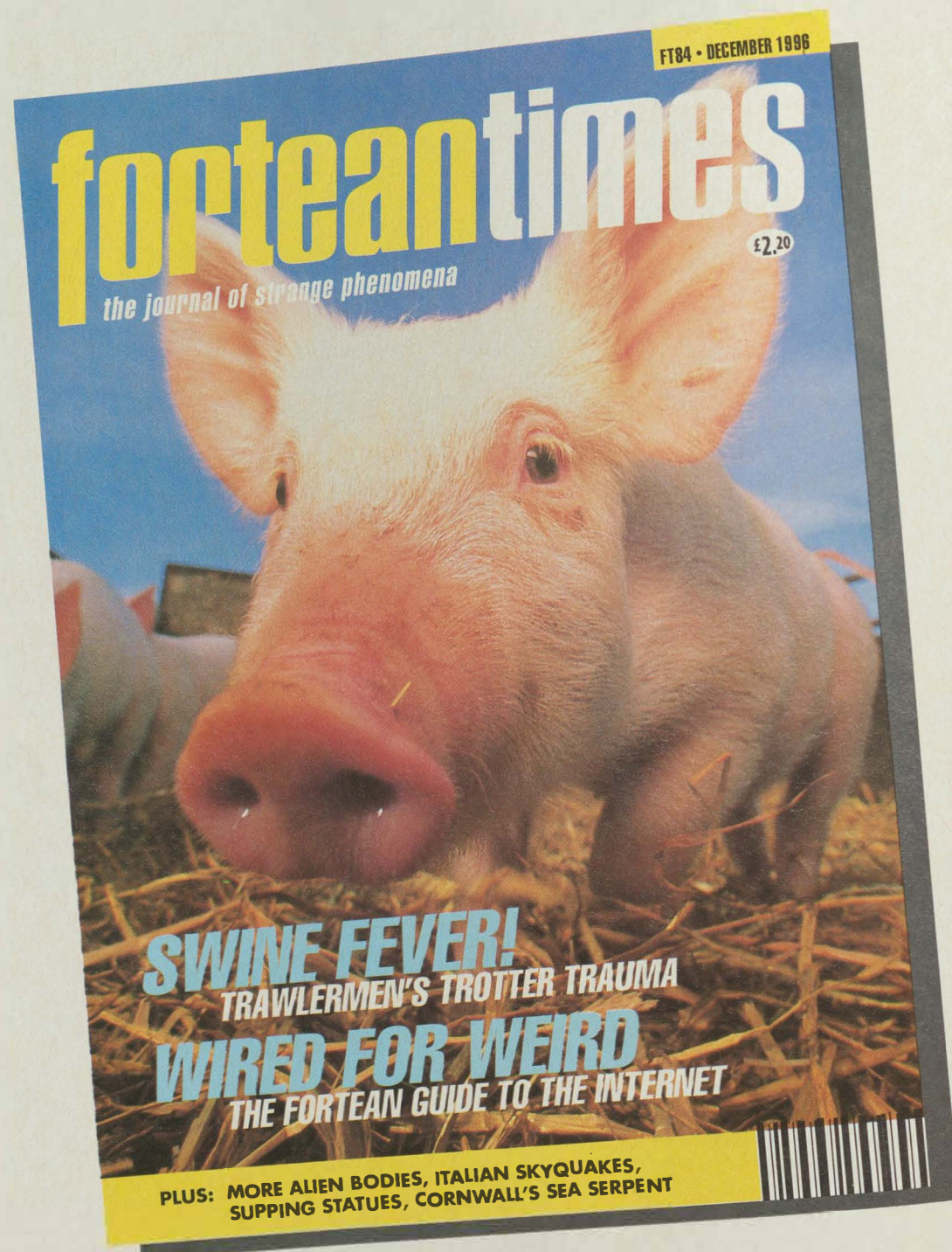


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Here's how Fortean Times will look from issue 85

This preview shows the new logo on the present cover



Look out for **FT85** on sale on the 10th of February 1996

STRANGE DAYS

LUCKY RASCAL

Two-year-old Kolby Grinston set off a fire alarm at Kiddie Kove Nursery in Chicago and marched out with his classmates as they had been trained to do. Moments later, a car ran through a red light and struck a second car, which smashed into the nursery as the children stood outside. The car ploughed through a play area and came to a halt on top of several lockers used by the youngsters.

The school's director said the children would have been at the lockers putting away their jackets if Kolby hadn't pulled the alarm.

The story doesn't end there. A van hit by the second car bumped into the youngsters going back into the school. Fourteen children aged four to six were slightly injured; one suffered a broken leg. [AP] 14 May 1995.

LOST AND FOUND

People from the village of Somo in Irian Jaya have sighted a primitive tribe living in tree houses in the Merauke area, close to the border with Papua New Guinea, according to local elder Arnold Tangkudung.

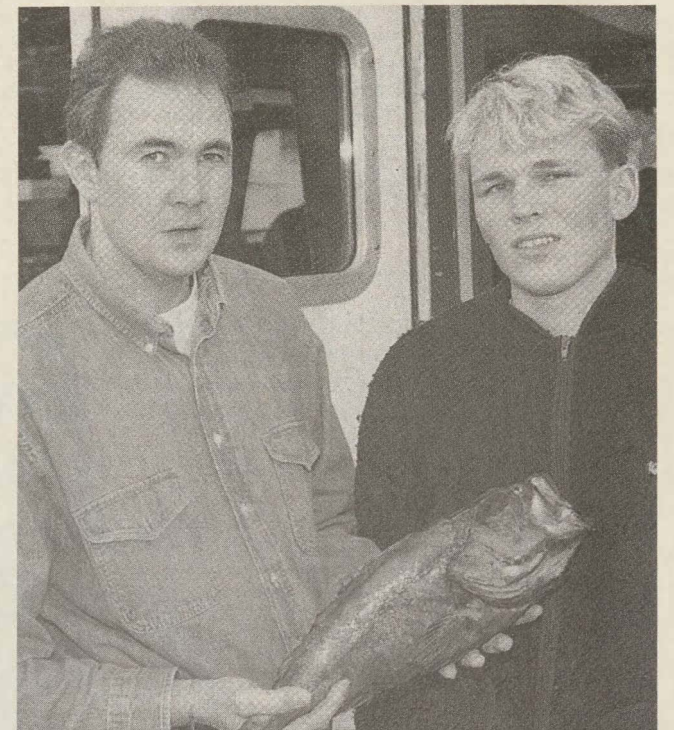
Mr Tangkudung said they were naked and he believed the tribe had no previous contact with the outside world and still practised cannibalism. The last cannibalistic, tree-living tribe to be discovered, the Mek, was found in 1974 in the same area. There have been several unconfirmed sightings since. [AFP] 15 Aug 1995.

For the first time in 10 years, an unknown Indian tribe has been discovered in the Amazon rainforest. A Brazilian government expedition came across a man and a woman in the western state of Rondonia in early September. The Indians, who carried bows and arrows, were near two huts which had corn, bananas and yams planted close by. There are thought to be other uncharted tribes in the region, about 2,400 miles north-west of Rio. [AP] 11 Sept; Guardian, 14 Sept 1995.



Rarely seen monsters No.47
Creature of the Blue Bayou

BLUE REDFISH



Trawlerman Mattiasson holds the freak fish. In the original colour photo, the fish is the same colour as his blue denim jacket.

An unprecedented blue Norway haddock or Redfish (*Sebastes marinus*) - "Karfi" in Icelandic - was caught in deep water off Skeljadypi, Iceland, last February. Kristján Egilsson at the Vestmannaeyjar museum of natural history could find nothing about blue Redfish in any reference work. He examined the freak find and declared that he suspected fraud, but the trawlermen who found it denied any imposture. Oskar Matthíasson, one of the crew, said that they had been fishing with a very big net slung between two trawlers, the *Bylgjan* and the *Þórunn Sveinsdóttir*. They often caught strange fish at such a depth, he said, and on this trip there had been very many. The Redfish was going to be stuffed. *Morgunblaðið* (Iceland), 25 Feb 1995.

WITH THIS KIDNEY I THEE WED...

Two Californians married on 11 October before going into hospital so that the bride could provide a kidney for the groom. Randall Curlee, 46, who knew he needed a transplant, took Victoria Ingram to see his doctor so she would understand how his diabetes would affect their future.

The doctor in Mission Viejo told them only 4,000 kidneys became available every year for the 36,000 people waiting for a transplant. Mr Curlee's relatives were not compatible as donors. Ms Ingram suggested that she be tested; it turned out that the couple's immune systems were identical. The doctor said it was like winning the lottery. [AP] Oct 1994.

STRANGE DEATHS

LISA POTTER, 21, went for a walk at night with her mother, Mrs Ann Everitt of Witham, Essex. When they came to the Moots Lane railway crossing where Lisa's father had been killed 11 years earlier, Mrs Everitt refused to continue. Lisa went and stood on the track and called, "Come on mum, it's all right." At that moment a train light appeared and Lisa was run over and killed. *D.Telegraph, 10 Aug 1995.*

AN EGYPTIAN searching for the treasures of the pharaohs was found on 5 July sitting cross-legged on top of a mountain, his corpse pecked by crows. Police in southern Egypt were searching the area near Saqolta mountain in Sohag province for four of his relatives who accompanied him on the treasure hunt. *[R] 6 July 1995.*

A YOUNG DANISH woman died while sunbathing by a pool in Bangkok, Thailand, when a man fell from the 18th floor of a high-rise condominium and landed on her. The man also died. *[AP] 18 Aug 1995.*

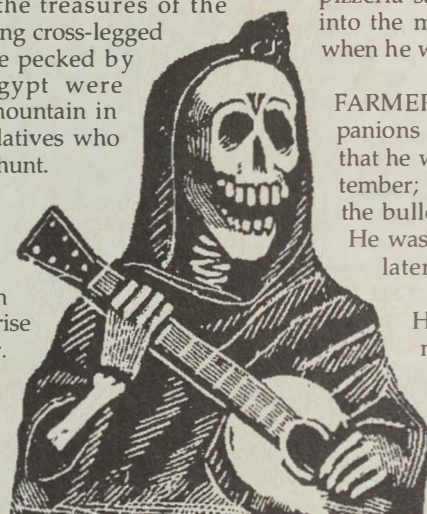
YIANNIS Karayannopoulos, 87, a farmer in Oropedio, near Grevena in northern Greece, believed that his cat had been stolen by his

neighbour, Thomas Koletsos, so he shot him dead as he left for work on 10 May. Mr Koletsos's wife, Chrysanthi, heard the shot, rushed out and was shot dead in turn. Karayannopoulos then turned the gun on himself. The cat returned later in the day. *[AP] 12 May 1995.*

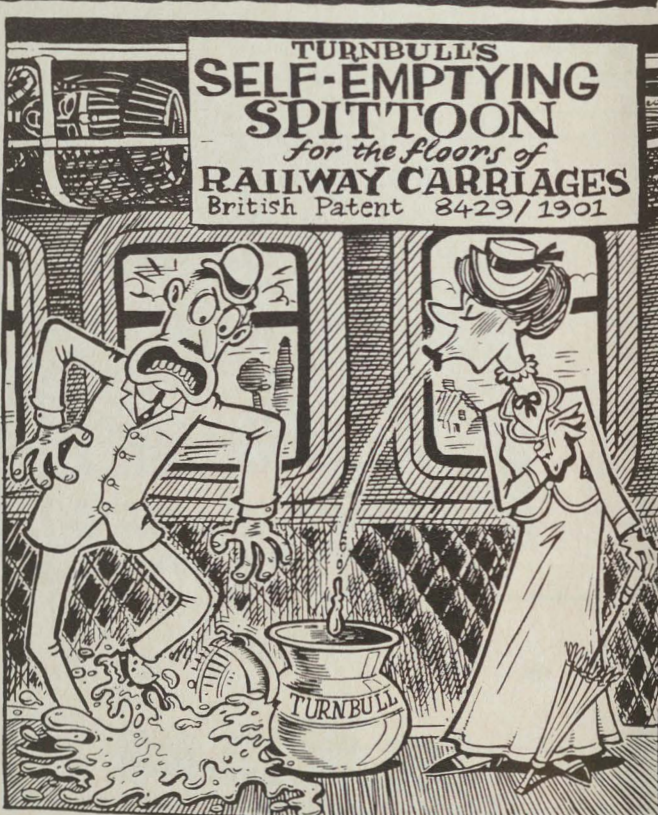
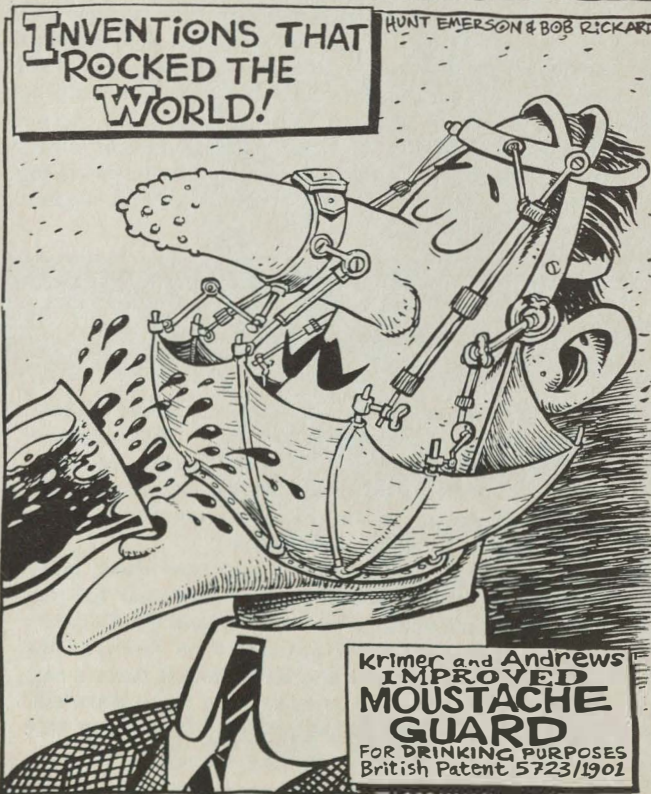
AN ISRAELI soldier on leave from combat duty was sucked into a giant dough-mixer and kneaded to death at Jerusalem's Mystic Pizza on 2 August. A co-worker at the pizzeria said that Moshe Dor-On, 21, had reached into the mixer to pull up dough from the bottom when he was sucked in. *[R] 3 Aug 1995.*

FARMER ISMAIL AYYILDIZ told drinking companions in the western Turkish province of Edirne that he would shoot out an aching tooth on 8 September; but the DIY dentistry proved fatal when the bullet left his mouth via the top of his head. He was rushed to hospital, but died a few hours later. *[R] 9 Sept 1995.*

HU PAO-YIN, 35, stabbed to death her mother-in-law on Christmas Eve. Her reason for this, she told police in Taiwan, was that "I am the most beautiful woman in the world and the existence of other women is unnecessary". Her adoptive mother survived a similar attack. *Western Mail, 16 Feb 1995.*



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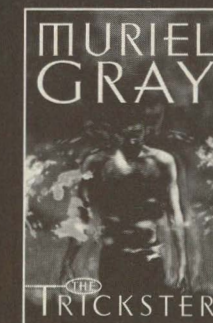
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BOOM! TIME FOR UFOs

Investigating some unexplained sonic explosions, **ROBERT IRVING** snoops around an Italian airforce base and hears strange rumours

On 11 May, this year, the *Il Gazzettino* newspaper of Pordenone, north-east Italy, reported that the previous day 100,000 people had been startled by a massive bang. "'Superbang', paura per centomila," yelled the headline. The story told of "le urla dei bambini - the screams of the children, police sirens, telephones burning. Much panic."

For a split-second, at precisely 11:13:25.80am, residents were subjected to the stomach-churning fear that an earthquake or a terrorist bomb had torn through the town.

Like an earthquake, not uncommon in the area, the effect tailed off to the sound of car alarms pervading Pordenone's usually quiet mediæval streets and then a stunned silence as emergency services prepared for the worst.

But there was no aftershock, and, apart from a few broken windows, when police checked the area they found no structural damage, no hole in the ground where a building once stood, and no injuries.

Meanwhile, five miles south, in the small market town of Sacile - known to locals as La Serenissima - all was calm. This too was noteworthy, according to the newspaper, leaving the *Sacilesi* to shrug their shoulders and down-turn their mouths at the story in their serene, time-honoured way.

Around Sacile, no one seems particularly bothered by mysteries; there are no weeping statues nearby, despite a recent proliferation of crying Madonnas throughout the rest of Italy, and the people seem blithely unaware that they live slap-bang in the middle of a UFO hotspot.

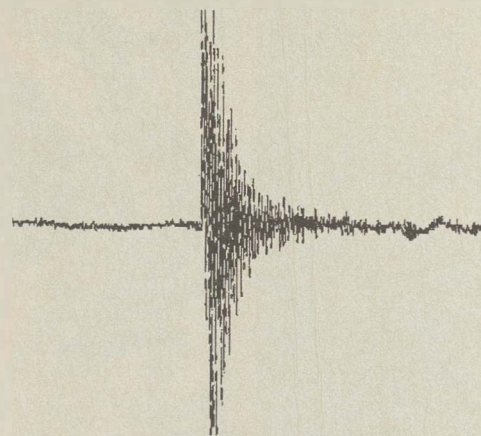
BASE DESIRES

Halfway between the two towns, a 20-minute cycle-ride past poppy-tinged barley fields, and line after line of grape-laden vines; past a house on the right with a large macaw in the garden, I free-wheel up to a sprawling complex of 500 buildings and huge hangars. Aviano Air Force Base is actually two bases butted together: the larger and more active is controlled by the US Air Force; while the other - considerably smaller, its buildings noticeably paint-peeled and rusty - is

of *Turista bellico* (war tourists), who gather in groups dotting the perimeter roads and surrounding fields. Most are young or youngish, dressed like skate-dudes and fully equipped with tents, video gear, little hand-held infra-red night-sights, and a couple of dog-eared copies of *Jane's Aircraft* between them all - just enough for ambiguous silhouette identification, and for rumours to spread like Chinese whispers. The tourists strike one as today's generation of train-spotters, progressed to fiercer vehicles; either that, or ufologists - for war might not be the only attraction.

Aviano has also gained its share of notoriety among ufologists. In his best-selling book *Above Top Secret*, author Tim Good relates the story of Benito Manfrè, a night-watchman of the ancient and picturesque Castello D'Aviano, set high in the oldest part of the town overlooking the base. One night in 1979, Benito was awakened by his dog barking and walked outside to see a stationary 'mass' of light hovering low over the hangars. Otherwise, according to the story, the base was in total darkness. After he had watched for a few minutes, Benito's light, now resembling a glowing disc, rose up and glided noiselessly past him before disappearing behind the mountains. Seconds later, the arc-lights of the base flickered on again. Through the mist Signor Manfrè could see vehicles and officers in unusual activity around the hangars.

Subsequent rumours have spread that the base, like many of its cousins back home, is only the outer skin of a vast underground facility. That this space may serve as a storage area for



The seismogram of the first Aviano Superbang recorded by Domenico Targhetta in Pordenone

the regional home of the Italian Air Force. The base's close striking distance to the Balkans, just a short flight across the Gulf of Venice, has ensured it much media attention. Since NATO's 'clean skies' policy was introduced, more than 80,000 'Deny Flight' missions have set off from the base, a traffic since doubled with the onset of Operation Deliberate Force. This increase has brought a growing influx



Spacecraft or spyplane? One of the strange shapes in the hangars at the Aviano base. The picture has been enhanced by computer.

secret discoidal craft has since become an irresistible assumption for Italian ufologists.

On a warm Sunday afternoon on the outskirts of the US base, a cluster of enthusiasts has gathered to watch the action in line with the main runway. Between the road and the outer fence is a stretch of scrubby wasteland, designed to keep tourists at a safe distance, sporadically (and ominously?) signposted: *Riserva di Caccia* - reserved for hunting. In a curious play on words, *Caccia* also doubles as a kind of semi-respectful, semi-derogatory term for the fighters which constantly buzz the skies.

As far as I can see today, much of the action involves a pair of muscular ground-staff joggers who wave at the group just as they did the last time they completed a perimeter lap. That

was half an hour ago. The group waves back, as one; it's as if they all know each other, and, in a way, by now, they do.

Then, more excitedly, someone with binoculars notices movement half a mile away as an F-18 rolls on to the tarmac. Giving little time to fully appreciate the play of its burn in the heat-haze, the craft soars above us with an almost deafening roar, a tightly-packed load of fuel tanks, bombs and thin white Sidewinder missiles slung from its sides.

It heads out into the wild blue, but limited, yonder of *spazio-Z*, the flight corridor to the coast; limited, because eager as the pilots might be to ditch their load on whoever happens to be bombarding Sarajevo at the time, while they're passing over Italy the law prohibits aircraft from flying faster

than the speed of sound. There are civilians to consider, after all.

SOUNDING OFF

These civilians made themselves heard after the events of May. The respective public relations officers at both bases found themselves fending calls, mainly from local journalists: "Who was responsible for the Superbang?"

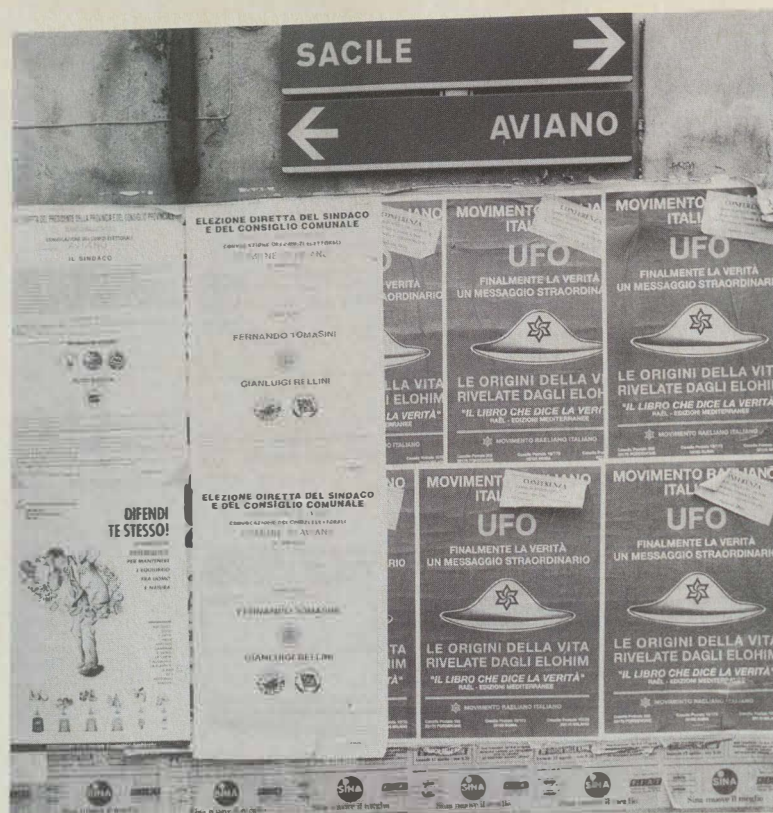
The Italians were the first to deny responsibility... except for the curious admission that yes, in fact they had violated the speed limit that morning, but over the mountains where few would hear, and at a different time to the bang in Pordenone. The American base commander, ever-mindful of his nation's own alien status, was more restrained: "As far as we're concerned," he said, "none of our aircraft went above the sound barrier. We're

still checking our rudder instrumentation, and we can check the black-box data. If the mistake came from us we'd be the first to tell you. It's the American way."

It is unusual in cases such as this for scientists and investigators to be able to examine anything more than mere post-event, hearsay evidence. But not in this case. At Pn1, the Seismological Survey Centre based in Pordenone itself, Domenico Targhetta's seismographs had been quietly tracing a flat-line as usual until 11:13:25.80. The print-out showed the bang had registered a healthy four on the Mercalli scale. Judging from the sharp fall-off on the reading, Targhetta could tell that the bang was not caused by an earthquake nor from any kind of explosion. According to the graph, the event had ceased as abruptly as it had begun. If an explosion or an earthquake had been the cause, he said, the graph would have shown a more gradual fall-off, and recorded a much lower frequency. Targhetta was convinced that the epicentre of the sound-wave was directly above the seismological lab. "It came from the air," he told the press. "You should ask the Americans."

BAR CODE

That evening in the California Beer Parlour in downtown Aviano, home from home for the US fly-boys, I moseyed up to a pair of young pilots who were casually sprawled, somehow, across five stools at the bar. They seemed to suit the cowhide wall-coverings, the decorative Colt 45s, sombreros, totem poles, and the wide-screen TV with its live boxing commentary punctuating the piped strains of Robert Johnson in rapid combination...if I had possession over Judgement day... and that's a serious cut over his left eye... hmmm-yeah, gonna fly my blues away... The place might have been conceived during one of David Lynch's over-caffeinated production meetings.



Signs of the times: Ufo posters vye for space with election notices

The first pilot wore a T-shirt with the message: "Death on Call... It's Us or You." His colleague's read: "No Fear - No Joke." I tried my best to look serious while one lifted his leg from a stool and bought me a beer. Would they be as generous with their stories?

On the way there I'd noticed a wall in the town which was covered in posters, the latest layer some kind of dull proclamation of the local communist party's performance in a recent election.

The message only partially covered the rest, pasted two deep and nine across, and illustrated in a more universal language: that of a classic disc-shaped craft in yellow on a purple

background marked in bold capitals... UFO. The posters were informing the locals, and the communities of all the surrounding towns, apparently, of an annual meeting of the Rael Movement: "Finally the Truth - an extraordinary message... The origin of life will be explained by The Elohim..."

Death and No Fear didn't attend the meeting, they told me, although it's likely some of their colleagues did, judging from the cars parked outside

the hall that night - mainly Chevvy Broncos and Fords, an occasional Firebird, with the odd, strangely out-of-place Alfa-Sud - all bonded by a six-figure plate prefixed 'AFI' (American Forces in Italy).

"Yeah, some of the guys are into that stuff," grinned No Fear. "Some of them get real fucking Biblical about it."

I asked about a strange craft I thought I'd seen jutting out from one of the hangars on the base. It was a long way from the fence, I said.

It looked chrome-coloured, but it was hard to see properly and could I have more details? Death smiled

a Colgate smile, poured me some more with a jovial back-slap - we were pals now - and then promised to send me some flight-suit patches and other mementoes (which never arrived). It's the American way.

At 5.45pm, six days after the first bang, a second rocked Sacile, this one grabbing the townsfolk's full attention. Police Commandant Angelo Covre was outside in the street overseeing the painting of parking enforcement lines when it came, and he instinctively looked up to see if there were any aircraft above. He saw nothing but felt "the earth shaking underneath my feet", immediately followed by a "fine, snake-like" hissing sound, a report later confirmed by other citizens.

Local seismologist Fiorenzo Camol told journalists that unfortunately he had "no time to turn on the machine", to record the bang, but

he described the accompanying noise as "...a low frequency hum, which seemed to come from the mountains". While the town's officials were arguing directional frequencies, Northern League representative Edouard Ballamanat, at the Italian Parliament in Rome, was directing questions at the Ministers of Transport and Defence: "The bangs have terrified the local population," he said, "provoking the urgent movement of police and ambu-

lance services. We have yet to receive a valid explanation of the events. There is a will to know if the noise is somehow related to military operations in Bosnia, or, more generally, of any other type of military operation near Aviano." Weeks later, he was still waiting for an answer.

By now, the local newspapers had been running daily reports of strange lights seen in the sky, sightings of saucer-shaped craft, and of odd-looking top-shaped craft with transparent cutaways which revealed aliens crammed together like commuters on a Delhi bus. Then came a backwash of abduction claims; the paranormal dynamic inevitably outweighing any attempts to report a more mundane interpretation.

The previous week's weeping statues were soon reduced to page five, as Pordenone, Sacile, and the entire Friuli region was swept by a UFO wave. Coming as it did, at around the time the first stills from the alleged Roswell autopsy footage were filtering through the Internet and following a couple of complementary UFO conferences, this saucer-tsunami had quickly engulfed the whole of Italy. As a case-study in how easily such waves can begin it was invaluable. But what, really, was the cause of the bangs?

WEATHER OR NOT?

As the front-page stories got wilder and the clues became scarcer, I sought refuge in the weather section. Even on the sunniest days, a whitish pall of cloud hangs over the hills which line the western horizon. They mark the start of a gradual rise to the Dolomite mountains and, further west, the Alps. This geography creates an individualised weather system, embracing the base - it always seems to rain in Aviano. The clouds form at the end of a low pressure system, where cold dense air hits the leeward heat of the flatlands creating a condition known to meteorologists as an orographic low.

Sound travels faster in denser air. The speed-of-sound threshold therefore depends upon variables, measured generally in Mach ratings rather than specific knots or miles-per-hour. A sonic boom is caused when



Home from home for the US airmen at Aviano

an object overtakes its own sound-wave, creating a partial vacuum. The resulting implosion in turn creates a dramatic compression effect, like a short, sharp, crack of thunder. If this object - let's imagine it's a conventional aeroplane - were cruising along at a speed marginally below this threshold, then a change in air density might cause the plane to hit Mach 1 momentarily without the pilot, or his instruments, realising it: boom!

Alternatively, an aircraft engaging in a rapid manoeuvre might create a compression wave caused by just a small part of its fuselage. If it turned from its approach rapidly enough - "fire & forget", as they say down at the California Beer Parlour - then the violent angular velocity of a rotating edge in relation to its axial hull could generate a shock wave without the event being recorded by the black-box or rudder readings. Again, this rare phe-

nomenon is known to occur in certain meteorological conditions, usually at low altitude.

Particularly prone to the effect are delta-shaped craft such as the radar, infra-red and electro-magnetic masking F-117 stealth fighters which, regardless of the Italian government's recent publicly-pronounced sensitivities, are rumoured to be based at Aviano. Perhaps downstairs?

Ufologists could argue that the same would apply to the stealthy F-117's alleged discoidal counterpart. And they might be right. For ufologists willing to step back from an apparent tendency to entertain only the most exotic suggestions, such phenomena could prove worthy of further investigation.

BACK AT THE BASE

Across the road from the main gate of the base, a skinny, fresh-faced youth named Ben separates from the group and walks over. He's been travelling through Europe, and made a special trip from Venice to get here. Back home in Colorado, Ben tells me, he is well-known as a "gun-totin' saucer-phreak". He wants to know what I'm writing in my notebook, so I mention the Superbang. "We heard about that too," he says. "Now all we've got to do is capture one on video."

Just as I'm asking 'capture what?', he puts a palmcorder to his eye and pans across the base. I watch the lens zoom in as it points toward the hangars. A short distance away, between us and the gate, two Carabinieri officers in an unmarked car sit snoozing in the shade of a sign on the fence which reads: No Photos.

"Saucers, man," Ben answers, "reverse-engineered technology. We all know about it. They've just gotta make that one mistake and we'll know for sure."

Note: 22 May 1995 at 13.17, Pn1 in Pordenone recorded an earthquake measuring 5 Mercalli/3.6 Richter centred 50 kilometres from Trieste at Mount Nevoso in Western Slovenia. This was followed by a second, stronger, shake (7 Mercalli/4.8 Richter) at 14.52. Both were felt in Trieste, the second as far west as Pordenone, Sacile, and the entire Friuli region



Ufologists stalk their prey in the ground reserved for hunters

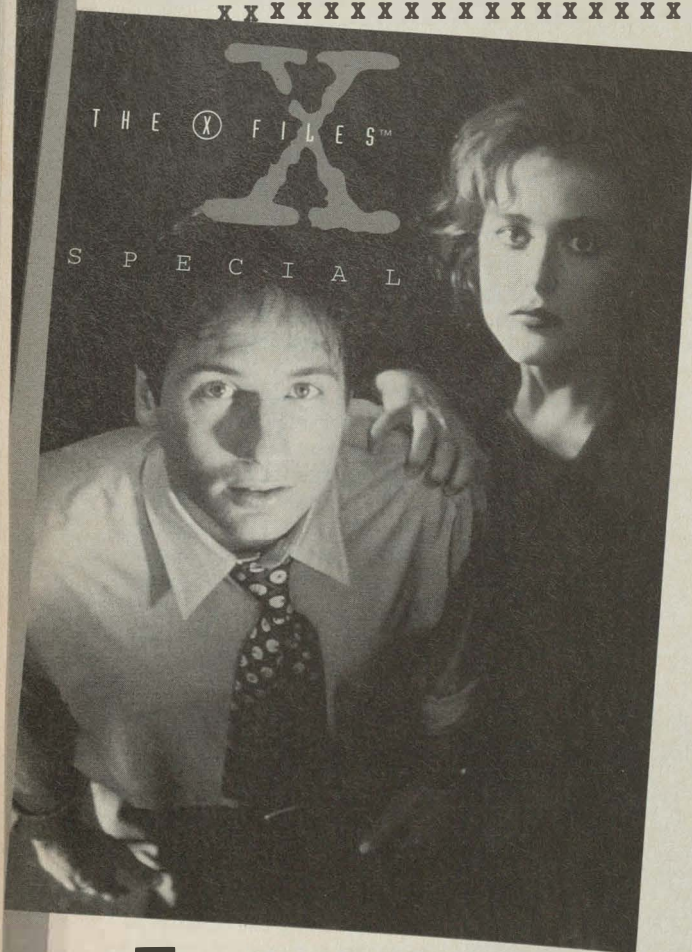
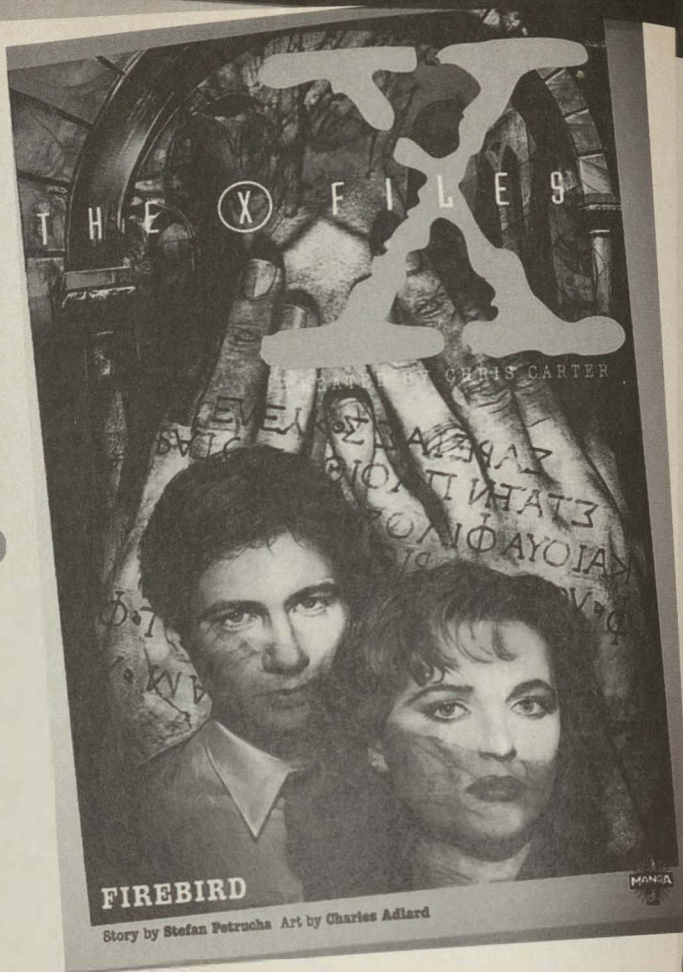
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ROSWELLED OUT!

The alien autopsy film continues to baffle and infuriate. As the prospect of finding unequivocal proof of its authenticity diminishes, BOB RICKARD attempts his own post-mortem before everyone is completely fed up with the subject. Also included in this body-bag of related bits, ERIS ANDYS floats a theory, we investigate a 'Chinese' alien photo, and put an inconclusive end to the Morgana photos hoax.

The year of 1995 will be remembered for Ray Santilli's attempt to market his 'alien autopsy' video. For the first time in decades, the subject of UFOs and aliens was discussed at length by national news media. Some of these treatments inevitably sneered, played on credulity and betrayed themselves with little or no research. Others applied their experience of investigative journalism to probe the background and players in the affair. They never really got very far as the press became impatient with the lack of substantiated fact and moved on. There were many rumours of subterfuge behind the film, including criticism of the part BUFORA officers played in the promotion of such a dubious commercial product. By the time of the BUFORA's eighth annual congress at Sheffield in August, the media were 'Roswelled out'.

One phenomenon was quite unexpected. As the researcher Rob Irving puts it: "Santilli's footage precipitated perhaps the strangest of all sights: an awkward mix of known believers in the extraterrestrial origin of UFOs, known disbelievers, believed fakers of it, innocent abstentionists and the downright disingenuous, all hissing 'hoax' at a piece of evidence that seemed to me as impressive as any I'd seen. But never in my lifetime had I expected to witness the subsequent co-operation between traditional adversaries. I mean, the likes of Jenny Randles and Paul Fuller joining with Anthony Dodd and the Birdsall brothers in adopting what Fuller has called 'a proper, sceptical attitude' in their agreement the footage was a transparent fraud."

Even though this was the verdict of most thoughtful ufologists, different people had different reasons for thinking so. For those who have missed the investigations, infighting and rumour-mongering, most of which has

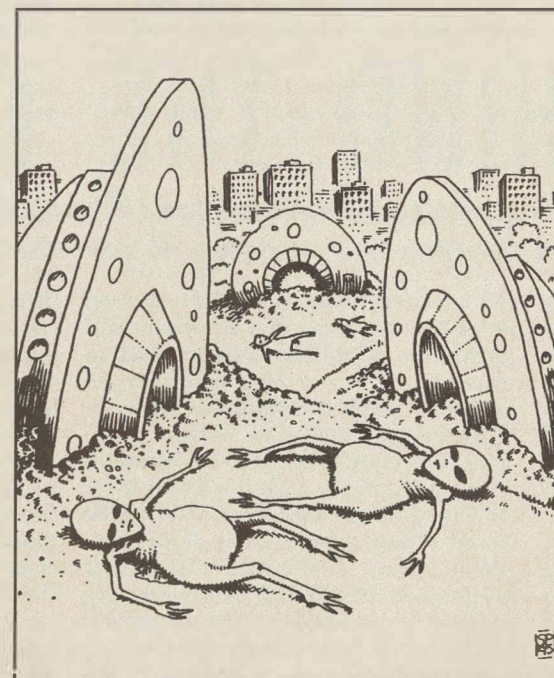
been conducted out of the public gaze or on Internet, the Yorkshire UFO group Quest International has compiled an eye-opening dossier [see details at end]. Even now, intense investigations are continuing to identify who made the film and how it came to be released in such a dubious way.

Thanks to diligent researchers, we now know that curly telephone wires (visible in the autopsy room) were available in 1947. There was no sign of the rumoured appearance of President Truman in the footage. (Phyllis Benjamin of INFO has invented the term 'Gumportation' to account for the mysterious, anachronistic appearance of celebrities in old black-and-white film used as dubious evidence of anomalies.) However, dating the film stock has proved more problematical. Earlier verifications are now being called into question and there is still no independent authentication of the exposure of the actual autopsy sequence. Typical of the convolutions faced by investiga-

tors is the matter of 'Jack Barrett', the alleged cameraman. During September, Internet gossip held that a French TV crew had finally tracked him down just hours before a crew from Fox TV. Now, according to news passed on to us by Rebecca Schatte of the excellent UFO newsletter *Houston Sky*, a man called Jack D. Barrett died in Los Angeles on 3 August 1995. "He was a member of the cameraman's union and had been in the military, although his career does not match that of Santilli's cameraman," Rebecca said. Santilli did not answer our query on the matter and continues to act as though his 'Jack Barrett' is still very much alive. Indeed, there is still no verification that 'Jack Barrett' is the real cameraman and not an assumed identity.

New versions of the cameraman's story propagated on Internet with a frequency that arouses suspicion. Perhaps the most dramatic was reported by researcher Linda Moulton Howe in the Internet UFO newsletter *ISCFI Flash* (1 Oct 1995). She met Santilli at a special convention at San Marino, Italy, at which the footage was shown to scientists, doctors and journalists, also attended by Dr Jesse Marcel, whose father was the intelligence officer at Roswell at the time of the alleged crash in 1947. Santilli referred to three broken control-like panels in the footage. "[He] told me [they] are what the cameraman said the three live humanoids were clutching to their chests when the military and medical teams arrived in the early morning hours of June 3, 1947. The cameraman called the humanoids 'Freaks' and said ... 'They just lay there crying, holding the boxes. They were protective of their boxes, but we managed to get one loose with a firm strike at the head of a Freak with the butt of a rifle'."

This is not the only unsavoury aspect emerging from



...and then three come along all at once.

the web of rumours. Serious investigators were further dismayed to learn of Volker Spielberg (a name that is bound to add to the confusion), a mysterious German backer who, in return for funding Santilli's purchase of the film, was allowed his choice of the footage for his own collection, sequences rumoured to be gorier and more disturbing than those shown. We may never know the truth of this, as Spielberg is said to have withdrawn his footage from open access, prohibiting any further attempts to authenticate it.

The dramatic nature of the first screenings of the footage was enhanced when a number of ufologists and their advisors reacted prematurely to the first showings of the autopsy film. Some like Kent Jeffrey, of the Roswell Initiative, clearly believed the alien to be "a doctored human corpse" and fulminated against the human monsters capable of such butchery.

Extensions of this argument held that the alien was a human sufferer of a rare syndrome, or the victim of radiation experiments, but sober reflection shows why this reasoning is wrong. Firstly, no one has come up with any so-called 'snuff' movie in which there is any comparable sequence. (For further discussion of this topic see the adjacent article by Eris Andys and 'Snuffing the Myth' by John Lundberg in *FT82:34-35*.)

Secondly, in most countries the failure to register a death, exhibiting a corpse and the unauthorised transportation of a corpse are all crimes. (Frank Hansen, the owner of the 'Minnesota Iceman' exhibit, gave his fear of

this kind of prosecution as his reason for substituting a latex model for the 'real corpse' - see 'Abominable Showman' by Ian Simmons in *FT83:34-37*.) The financial returns would simply not be worth the risk.

Just as reprehensible would be the surgical altering of a corpse (never mind three). So far, those pathologists who have seen the footage have not detected any sign that the 'alien' was doctored to enlarge its head or attach extra digits. Yet a German surgeon, Dr Joachim Koch, scorned the idea that the autopsy was genuine. His statement - published in *ISCNI Flash* (1 Sept 1995) - includes these observations: "An autopsy of an alien would have been an extraordinary event... performed in a large room so that many pathologists could have been present. It would have been performed very carefully, methodically, perhaps over several weeks. Careful filming and many slides and still photos would have resulted... Nothing done by the film's 'doctors' seems to indicate that they were aware of handling something of extraordinary value to mankind."

A number of congenital or genetic anomalies have been proposed to explain the alien morphology (including Turner's syndrome, Laurence-Moon-Beadle syndrome and progeria or rapid aging). The best fit, proposed by Dr Koch, is C-syndrome, which produces an appearance very like Santilli's Unidentified Entity (SUE). However, even Dr Koch admits that most sufferers of C-syndrome die while very young and the chances of finding two

or more dead adults for filming would be incredible and effectively rules out these medical theories. If these were models, the cost of making at least three whole alien bodies (perhaps more, if the SFX experts are correct about the need to substitute several prepared versions for the autopsy sequence) would be prohibitive to anyone without serious financial backing.

Yet, despite the widespread condemnation of the film and all this circumstantial evidence of its dubiety, there is still a lack of any definitive proof that it is a hoax. As the factual vacuum continues, we have heard of a number of ufologists who are beginning to waver.

Rob Irving, for one, originally a sceptic, now wonders "whether it might be time to entertain what one former protagonist of the hoax theory called 'a worthwhile intellectual exercise'." Eris Andys does just that in the article below. She does not claim that SUE is genuine, only the depiction of alien characteristics, and argues that fiction is often a vehicle for fact and we should be paying attention to what the footage is telling us in the light of ufology's own history.

NOTES: Graham Birdsall, *Report on the Alleged Roswell Archive Footage* (£5; from Quest International, Box 2, Grassington, Skipton, North Yorks BD23 5UY, UK).

ISCNI Flash is the twice-monthly electronic bulletin of the Institute for the Study of Contact with Non-human Intelligence based on America On-line. Information can be had from their web page (<http://www.iscni.com>) or by email (ISCNI-Flash@aol.com)

FACT BEHIND THE FICTION?

In reviewing some of the half-baked explanations of Santilli's alien, ERIS ANDYS wonders whether the alien autopsy is a message. If so, what does it portend?

The 'Roswell alien autopsy' affair is an example of a dreadful reconciliation with reality: misinformation meets voodoo logic in a debate in which many of the scenarios, proposed as explanations, themselves require looking into.

Premise number one was that the 'alien' was a human victim of radiogenic mutation, or a radiogenic mutant who also just happened to develop a severe case of acromegaly or hydrocephaly. People who have used this sloppy argument should check the files of the Institutes for Radiation Research at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Not even the radiation-happy Frankensteins at the MOD would make this ridiculous assertion. Radiation induced mutation would leave one looking like a cripple, not an alien. Exposure to high doses of radiation does not suddenly give one six well-formed digits on each hand and foot; this kind of thinking harks back to the days when *Attack of the Fifty Foot Woman* and *The Incredible Shrinking Man* topped the bill. According to them, the inevitable consequence of exposure was instant transformation, which left you large or small, bald and mean. It was only later that Hollywood

learned the awful truth, that radiation caused random malformations which were both inconvenient and unsightly. Perfectly formed symmetry accompanied by many other anomalies, internal and external, is not a radiogenic birth defect or mutation package. Full stop.

Having worked in the film business, I can say that 99 per cent of the special effects people in that business learned anatomy from those kits in which plastic pieces slot together over a skeleton or from books on general physiology. Very few have the skill to detail skull structure, as is clearly shown by the hoax photos sent to FT.

Finally, we have the 'life is cheap' concept, which involves some poor unfortunate (who also happens to have at least nine visible major physical differences from human physiology not caused by disease or mutation) who has been butchered for whatever price Santilli paid the cameraman.

Charming - and also very far-fetched. 'Cutting up the weird space-babe' films aren't exactly in hot demand in the smoky dens of Mexico City or anywhere one cares to name. In South America (the site for this premise), any woman with so many odd features would be more valuable alive than dead and having joined a circus, as most freaks do, she would have the money and respect to have been buried and not dissected in this way. Besides, who would seek out 1947 film stock for a nasty little snuff flick?

So what are we left with? I believe we have here the USAF release of the Roswell crash and autopsies. As much as we really don't want to believe it, here it bloody well is in all its terrible glory.

Before ufologists kneejerked their way through a denial of the authenticity of the film, they should have reviewed the backlog of abduction cases which provides all the clues needed to access the film.

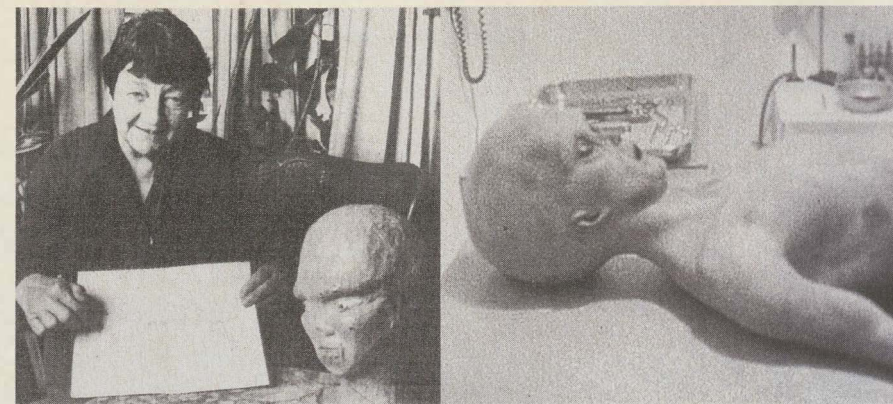
Firstly, there are thousands of people who have testified to firsthand observations of this type of being. I strongly doubt that they are all liars or deluded. Some, like Betty Hill, have even gone to the trouble of having likenesses made. During their abduction on 19 September 1961, the Hills observed a small though important aspect of alien anatomy that was puzzling at the time but which has been revealed as evolutionary perfection.

Ufologists may recall Barney Hill's terror-stricken memory of the alien's eyes changing shape and colour. During the autopsy, the real or synthetic dark eyelid is peeled off to reveal the white of an eye with the pupil rolled back.

In November 1966, under deep hypnosis, Barney Hill stated: "I've never seen eyes slanted like that! They began to be round - and went back like that - and like that. And they went up like that..." In fact, this could account for the difference between the autopsy subject and Betty Hill's bust of her favourite alien [see the illustration above]. Frankly, even my six-year-old daughter could see the similarity.

The alien's eye in Santilli's film should not be ignored. It is direct evidence against the hoax explanation

and tests whether ufologists have paid attention to 50 years of accounts involving helmets, masks, lenses and changing eyes. For this to be a hoax, the hoaxer would have to be a jump ahead of all the ufologists on the plan-



Compare Santilli's alien [right] with a model Betty Hill had made of one of her abductors. Note how they both share a high triangular configuration of the cheekbones, the enlarged frontal lobe and brow ridge, features which are absent from the Morgana hoax head [see also p33].

et. It would have been easier to have left the bogus eyes alone. After all, who but a few thousand abductees would have known the difference?

This striking adaptation of the eye suggests a varied and complex evolution in several environments - that is, if the 'tunic' or covering of the eye is, indeed, part of the eye and not a soft lens of artificial construction. If it is the latter, perhaps we are looking at something from our own future, from a time when semi-transparent, protective eyelid implants replace sunglasses in a world that is hot, wet and relentlessly charged with ultraviolet rays. In any case, the eyes would be better studied by evolutionists than pathologists. Despite the misguided declarations of journalists to the contrary, there is every reason to believe that life resembling our own could evolve under different conditions elsewhere in the universe.

The public have difficulties enough forming an opinion about the Santilli film while fear, ignorance and narrow-mindedness is so rampant and the usual experts - doctors and ufologists - have been no use at all. But what about Hollywood?

This is not the first time that important information has been filtered through show-biz first. During the early Fifties, studios churning out flying saucer movies had a steady stream of visitors from the Pentagon. By the mid-Fifties the movie-going public already knew about the size of the aliens, the revolving nature of their craft and their use of gravity-defying tractor beams from such films as *This Island Earth* (1955). Even such curiosi-

ties as the way our transmissions might interfere with their craft - dramatised in *Earth vs The Flying Saucers* (1956) - can be traced back to an FBI memo of March 1950 implying that "radar interferes with the control-

ling mechanism of the saucers" (see Timothy Good's *Above Top Secret*, p523).

But seeing is evidently not believing. I have watched disappointed as respected ufologists resort to half-baked arguments against the film and trying to get some dirt on Santilli. Certainly he should be investigated, but this would not explain the film. He was just another guy who paid an ex-military jock for something authentic when the time was right. Saucer footage is sold this way - by the yard.

But what is the object of the exercise? It is certain that if the USAF didn't want the film shown, Santilli would not have had it. Nor is it something the military would have allowed to rot in someone's attic. If it had really been in his possession, the cameraman had 48 years to sell it - and for a lot more money. So why now, and why this?

The medium is the message. It tells us that despite some differences, the aliens are similar to ourselves and vulnerable. If we had the technology, we could kick their tiny alien butts. If we are being shown aliens, it is more likely that the military is observing our reactions. The rationale, as always, is that we can take it if it looks like show-biz.

The Santilli film cannot be seen as a lucky break. It is a contrived and stage-managed test of the feasibility of showing a real alien to the public for the first time. They're here - some of them wearing large hats and wraparound ski glasses. If we pass them in the street we might think them ill. Someone wants us to think again.

THE CHINESE ALIEN MYSTERY

In September, Santilli's alien was overshadowed by another mysterious 'dead alien'. BOB RICKARD chased the corpse around the globe

The so-called 'Chinese' alien was first brought to our attention by Filip Coppens (of the Frontier Sciences Foundation in the Netherlands) who sent us copies of three murky photos which were circulating in a UFO email mailing list group.

Both he and Steve Wingate, an American, posted the photos on their Web sites. As so little was known about them, they decided to take a

back-seat and study how news of the picture would propagate and how people would react to them.

Through the wonder of email, Filip referred me to Angus Wong, a journalist in Hong Kong, who originally posted the photos on the mailing list. Wong told me he had scanned them off a page of a Chinese language weekly newspaper called *Ming Pao News* sometime in late August 1995 (issue #1397, date

unknown). As far as Angus could establish, the photos came from "a Japanese UFO group that allowed the Hong Kong paper to access its photo stock." It gets worse; the Japanese UFO group thought the photos were sent to them by a Japanese journalist working in the USA, and there the trail evaporated.

I was beginning to warm to the possibility that this was a portrait of a 'real' alien, leaked in a deliberately roundabout way, as predicted by Eris Andys – after all, its head and face conform more closely to the classic description of the Grays than does Santilli's Unidentified Entity, SUE. Then, just as we were going to press, the mystery was solved from an unexpected direction.

Paul Davids, producer of the 1994 movie *Roswell* (starring Martin Sheen and Kyle McLachlan), downloaded the photos and identified the alien as one of four "props" made for his film. He had loaned one to the International UFO Museum and Research Center in Roswell, New Mexico, where it is displayed on a hospital-type bed. In a statement to Michael Lindemann of ISCNI, Davids said: "I have compared the body in all its details to the... photos I have of that particular movie prop. My determination is 100 per cent correct... Each detail of every wound matches."

It seems clear that a visitor to the museum photographed the display and, as the pictures found their way on to the Web via Japan and Hong Kong, their origin was forgotten, omitted, garbled or misconstrued. We contacted the Museum in Roswell which very kindly sent us a photo of the exhibit which clinched Davids' identification.

The case of the 'Chinese' alien now joins the file on photos from exhibition displays or movies that have been passed off as the real thing. For recent examples see the 'Cheddar goblin' (FT82:11), and the 'Montreal Expo alien' (FT80:26).

Note

Thanks for aid in research to: Rebecca Schatte (Houston Sky); Filip Coppens (Frontier Sciences Foundation); Angus T.K. Wong. Special thank to the staff of the International UFO Museum & Research Center: Box 2221, Roswell, NM 88202, USA (400 North Main, Roswell), Tel: 505 625-9495.



The view of the 'Chinese' alien shown above was downloaded from the Frontier Sciences Foundation homepage: <http://lntouch.info.nl/FSF/newssite.htm>. A caption in Chinese implied that the alien had been found by a Japanese professor in 1970.

Compare it with the photograph below of one of the four models made for the movie *Roswell* which are on display in the International UFO Museum in Roswell.



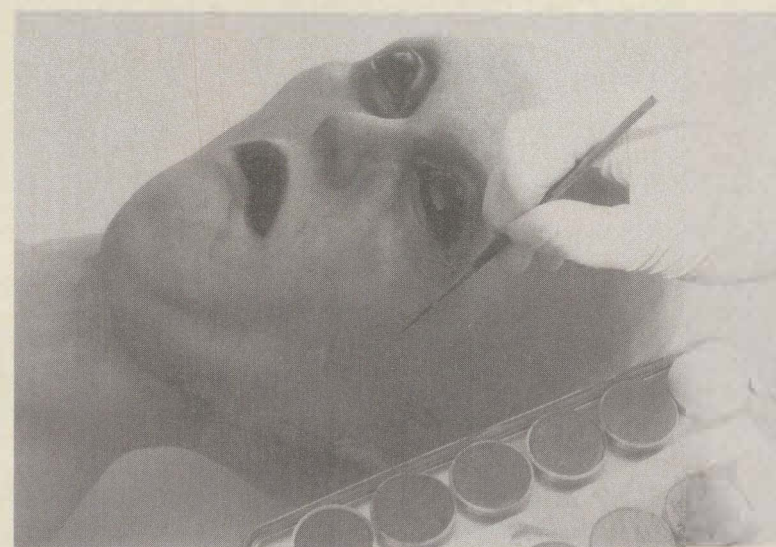
MORGANA LE FAKE

Who sent FT three alien-head photos in August 1995? Despite our efforts to find out, BOB RICKARD thinks we may never know. Here's why

In August, FT was sent three pictures of model alien heads being touched up by an artist (FT83:6). Supposedly they came from an outfit called 'Morgana Productions' but the name was certainly a joke on Santilli's company 'Merlin Productions'. As time goes by, it has become increasingly difficult to determine who was behind 'Morgana'.

George Wingfield, editor of *The Cerealologist*, pointed the finger of suspicion at John Lundberg and Rod Dickinson publicly (via bulletins on the Internet) and it is easy to see why. George's distrust of them was borne out of their crop-circle faking antics in previous years and their association with the professional model-making business. Today John is doing a post-graduate course in multi-media and Rod is gaining a reputation as a painter with several exhibitions behind him. Both have been associated in the past with Atlas Models in south-west London, which has a relationship with the movie resources company Imagination. In some of the garbled rumours, Imagination has been wrongly confused with one of Santilli's companies called 'Exploitation' (International Exploitation Management).

Even though John and Rod seem likely candidates, they are the victims of much distorted rumour. For example, I was told that John had previously modelled aliens for Santilli; the truth was quite different and easily determined. Some years ago John was commissioned by BUFORA's Philip Mantle to make several copies of a diorama of the Roswell crash site for sale at the 1993 Sheffield conference. The 'models' were jokey art pieces about a foot across, consisting of the imprint of a china saucer (sans cup) with a scattering of little plastic people. The Santilli connection was a distortion of the fact that Mantle has



Another of the Morgana photos. Examination by John Lundberg has determined numerous differences from the head of SUE (Santilli's Unidentified Entity), including subtle discrepancies in expression and proportions; the lower location and shape of the ears; the shape of the nose and nostrils; and the darker skin tone.

worked closely with Santilli in the publicity for the autopsy video.

Some researchers have invested considerable effort trying to prove that the Morgana jokers must have some connection with a professional SFX outfit. In my view, this is a red herring. The sculpting of the fake alien head and the photography are all within the ability of a large number of people of artistic bent in the crop circle and UFO fraternities.

Likewise, the grubbing around for evidence of old grudges between the main parties to interpret as motivation enough for this convoluted way of evening the score is a waste of time, because at one time or another almost everyone in the field has been at loggerheads with someone else. It would fail anyway because the issue of Santilli's footage has united former enemies in unexpected alliances.

Wingfield later retracted his accusation and John Lundberg has satisfied me that he and Rod were not involved at all in making the Morgana photos. John put in some sterling detective work, tracing the paper to a Snappy Snaps outlet in south-west London not a million miles from Atlas Models. It is highly likely that, because of their high profile, John and Rod became candidates for framing by one or more jokers among their professional acquaintances who

also take an interest in ufology.

That the culprits lie elsewhere is also the belief of John Spencer, *de facto* head of BUFORA, who, in September, issued a curious and copyrighted statement to the effect that he knows the identities of the perpetrators but won't name them because he believes they have done ufology a service and "would now like to be left in peace". According to Spencer, who boasts of "contacts in most of the major special effects companies", it was during tests on

the set of photos sent to BUFORA that one of his long-time friends in that business let slip a careless word that revealed his knowledge of the affair. He confessed when Spencer promised not "to give the game away".

At the same time as Spencer's bizarre and unhelpful announcement, BUFORA's Mike Wooton sent us a release purporting to come from 'Morgana Productions UK' – although there is no proof that it comes from the same Morgana that made the hoax pictures. In essence it proclaims that 'The Morgana Project' was a response to the irresponsible journalism that promoted Santilli's footage as genuine to a credulous public with the connivance of top ufologists.

It went on to say that Morgana's fear was misplaced as "the general consensus after the worldwide showing of segments of [Santilli's] archive film on 28/08/95 was in line with what Morgana believed all along – that the film was a fake".

In a way, the authorship of the hoax photos no longer matters because the game has moved on. Instead of precipitating a clarification of the Santilli footage (if the second Morgana release is to be believed) they became an unwanted distraction.

Imagine all the articles in a year's worth of Fortean Times being delivered to your home every weekend for no more than the price of a phone call. As one of 30 million users of the Internet, IAN TRESMAN gets all this and more, but wouldn't give up his FT. In the next four pages he explains how you too can be...

WIRED FOR WEIRD

This weekend, I read a couple of controversial articles that would blow your mind, but you probably won't see them published in any magazine. By Sunday morning I had sent a note to the author with some suggestions of my own, and received a reply that evening. What's more, it had all cost me less than the price of a stamp.

I was using the Internet, the most useful resource for those interested in strange phenomena since the appearance of *Fortean Times*. In this article I'll tell you what you can expect to find of Fortean interest on this revolutionary new form of communication.

WHAT IS THE INTERNET?

The Internet is a worldwide telecommunications network just like the telephone system, but designed for people who have computers. All kinds of people both use the Internet and make information available on it. Anyone with a personal computer such as a Mac or IBM PC can exchange messages using electronic mail (e-mail), display pages that look like they come from a magazine (the World Wide Web), and take part in discussion groups with other people (UseNet groups). There are, for example, tens of millions of Web pages stored on computer sites around the world, and – best of all – you can search them for almost any kind of information, on any subject, in a matter of minutes.

Do you want to find out how telepathy may work? No problem, in seconds you could be reading the World Wide Telepathy Mind Network based in Minto, Australia.

Interested in Homeopathy? Then a few clicks of your computer mouse displays the UK-based Homeopathy Home Page, with dozens of options to look at relevant information on other computer sites world wide.

Curious about the Kooks Museum? You won't find it in any known building on Earth, it exists solely on the Internet, where you can display pages

about Conspiracy, Questionable Scholarship, Ancient Health secrets, and more; there's even an on-line 'gift shoppe'.

USENET GROUPS

Some of the best places to discuss strange phenomena on the Internet are in the many UseNet groups. Over 10,000 groups covering every subject imaginable are open to everyone and cost nothing to join. For example, the UseNet group called alt.misc.fortean (short for: alternative, miscellaneous, fortiana) is for people to discuss anything about Charles Fort and related phenomena. Another group called sci.skeptic (science, skeptic) is a group for skeptics discussing pseudo-science (for an example of different subjects, see the box on page 39). A list of UseNet groups of interest to Fortean readers is given in the box on page 38. Taking part in a UseNet group is easy; first, your computer makes a telephone call to a company called an Internet provider that supplies you with your Internet service. Computer software called a newsreader then transfers the messages from your provider's computer to your own and a minute or so later, when the call finishes, you get to read all the messages in the group. You're at liberty to respond to any message you want, or to add your own message on any subject you choose. When you next call your Internet provider, your messages are transferred to their computer which then relays them to participating computers around the globe.

THE WORLD WIDE WEB

The fastest growing and most popular part of the Internet is called the World Wide Web, often abbreviated to WWW or just called the Web. It's popular because information appears like the pages of a magazine complete with colour images. Once again, you dial into your Internet provider (usually just a local call) and you receive pages from all over the world.

One advantage that Web pages have over magazine pages is something called links or hot spots. These are words or pictures that are highlighted on the page in a different colour, or underlined. Selecting the link takes you from your current place on a page to another place in the document, or a completely different document located on a different computer that might be in another country. A good place for readers of this magazine to start is *Fortean Times's* own homepage (see panel on page 39) because it includes dozens of links to other relevant sites.

To display Web pages on your computer, you need a piece of software called a Web Browser, and the 'address' which represents the location of the page that you want to see; for example, the *Fortean Times* Web homepage can be found at <http://alpha.mic.dundee.ac.uk/ft/ft.cgi?-1,ft> (http stands for HyperText Transfer Protocol, computer jargon which tell you the page is a Web-style document). You can see from the address that FT's homepage is in sub-directory '/FT' on a computer called 'alpha' at a site called 'mic' (the Micro-centre) at an academic site in Dundee (Dundee University) in the UK. You'll sometimes see the Web address referred to as a 'URL' (or Uniform Resource Locator).

SEARCHING THE WEB

So how do you find something of interest among the millions of pages on the Web? There are two main ways. First, you can 'surf' the Internet – meaning that you browse from page to

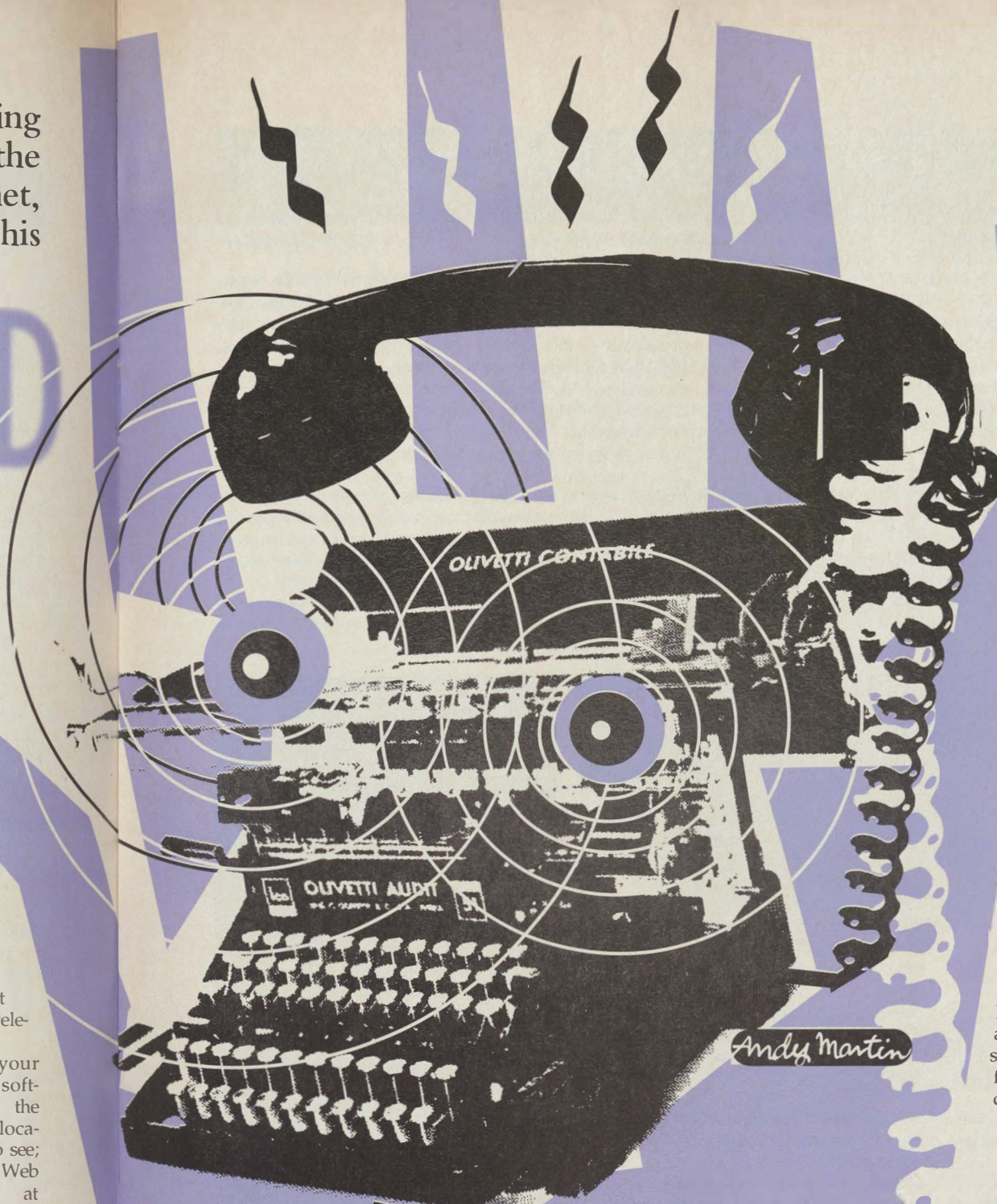
page and site to site using the links. You'll need a good starting page such as the *Fortean Times* homepage (a 'homepage' is usually the first or title page of a set of pages) which features a compendium of links to sites of interest. For example, those interested in Velikovsky will find a link to The Society for Interdisciplinary Studies (for Web address, see box on page 38) which in turn includes links to other sites of interest to Velikovskians.

The second way to find Web pages is to carry out a keyword search. Web sites specialising in searching are called Search Engines. One of the more popular ones is called Lycos at Carnegie-Mellon University in the States. The Web page includes a space where you enter one or more keywords, and a 'Search' button. For example, I entered 'UFOS' and in about 15 seconds the search result indicated that it had found 750 references to UFOS, displaying brief descriptions of the first 10 sites.

I selected the first site – 'The World Wide Web Virtual Library: Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOS)' – which itself had a list of other interesting UFO sites, such as one titled 'A Listing of UFO Related Organisations' and another promising 'Some Pictures and a Description of Area 51'.

Be warned though, the Internet and the World Wide Web can be addictive. It's like having a library of your favourite books instantly accessible. Fortunately, computers aren't waterproof and the bath is the only place to read my *Fortean Times*. I wonder when they'll make that waterproof too?

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Web address: <http://www.knowledge.co.uk/xxx/>
Fax 0181 905 1879





MAKING CONTACT

A good place to begin your search for hardware and software is the monthly computer and Internet magazines on the news-stands in which products and services are regularly evaluated and the latest versions reviewed and prices can be compared.

To get on the Internet you need a computer with a modem, a subscription to an Internet provider, some software, and access to a telephone socket. PCs, Macs and Amigas are all suitable (minimum recommended PC specification: 486DX66, 400MB Hard disk drive, 4M-8M memory, MS Windows 3.1). The modem (about £100) should work at a speed of at least 14400 bps (technically called V.32bis), and 28800 bps (V.34) is recommended.

The Internet provider is the company you phone via the modem to be hooked up to the Internet. Many providers charge a flat rate fee of about £10-£15 per month, others have an additional hourly charge. Ideally, your provider should be fairly local - connection numbers can

be found for most regional cities - so that you pay only local call rates, even when you are looking at information on computers on the other side of the world.

Your Internet provider may optionally include software for your make of computer. Some supply 'shareware' software which you are expected to pay for after you have evaluated it; other providers will sell you software for which there is no additional charge. Look for an off-line reader as they allow you to read e-mail and news and to compose your replies without running up the phone bill. You need to connect to your provider only when you are ready to send or collect your mail and news, whereas net surfing requires connection for the duration of your activity.

Two pieces of software I can recommend are 'Netscape' as your Web browser, and 'Agent' as your newsreader (both are available as shareware on the Internet). The net magazines available on news-stands often list addresses from which you can download the latest versions of these and other browsers free of charge.

USENET: THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

Aeon, The Journal of Myth and Science

<http://www.knowledge.co.uk/xxx/cat/aeon/>

Altered States of Consciousness (NDEs, Psi, etc)

<http://www.utu.fi/~jounsmad/asc/asc.html>

'Astrology et al' Bookstore

<http://www.wolfe.net/~astroet/>

ConspiracyWeb - The Web Site for Paranoids

<http://www.awpi.com/ConspiracyWeb/index.html>

DreamLink

<http://www.iag.net:80/~hutchib/dream/>

Flying Saucer Review (UK's oldest UFO magazine)

<http://www.cce.hw.ac.uk:80/~ceewb/fsr/>

Fortean FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/anthro/fortean-faq.html>

Fortean Times On-Line

<http://alpha.mic.dundee.ac.uk/ft/ft.html>

FringeWare™, Inc.

<http://www.fringeware.com/>

Homeopathy Home Page

<http://www.dungeon.com/~cam/homeo.html>

Hot AIR: (tidbits from the Annals of Improbable Research)

<http://www.improb.com/>

Icelandic Astrology Forum

<http://www.grun.is/iaac/other>

Institute for the Study of Contact with Non-human Intelligence (ISCNI)

<http://www.iscni.com/>

Kooks Museum (Donna Kossy)

<http://www.teleport.com/~dkossy/>

News of the Weird (Chuck Shepard)

<http://www.nine.org/notw/notw.html>

Point Communication's

[Miscellaneous Marvels](http://www.pointcom/gifs/reviews/romm.htm)

<http://www.pointcom/gifs/reviews/romm.htm>

Schwa (Alien Security)

<http://www.theschwacorporation.com/>

SIS Home Page (Velikovksy, Catastrophism)

<http://www.knowledge.co.uk/xxx/cat/sis/>

Skeptics Society (CSICOP)

<http://www.skeptic.com/>

Strange Magazine

(Mark Chorvinsky)

<http://www.cais.com/strangemag/home.html>

The Anomalist (Dennis Stacy & Patrick Huyghe)

<http://www.cloud9.net/~patrick/anomalist>

World Wide Telepathy Mind Network

<http://www.magna.com.au/~rwin/ldhp.html>

World Wide Times (UFO archive)

<http://www.aloha.com:80/~k/>

World-Wide Web Virtual Library: UFOs

<http://ernie.bgsu.edu/~jzawodn/ufo/>

Yahoo - Entertainment:

[Paranormal Phenomena](http://www.yahoo.com/Entertainment/Paranormal_Phenomena/)

http://www.yahoo.com/Entertainment/Paranormal_Phenomena/

THE WEIRD AND WONDERFUL WORLD WIDE WEB

alt.astrology

[alt.astrology.asian](#)

[alt.consciousness.](#)

[mysticism](#)

[alt.conspiracy](#)

[alt.conspiracy.area51](#)

[alt.conspiracy.jfk](#)

[alt.dreams](#)

[alt.folklore.ghost-stories](#)

[alt.folklore.info](#)

[alt.folklore.science](#)

[alt.folklore.urban](#)

[alt.magic](#)

[alt.magic.secrets](#)

[alt.magick](#)

[alt.misc.fortean](#)

[alt.mythology](#)

[alt.parallel.universes](#)

[alt.paranet.abduct](#)

[alt.paranet.metaphysics](#)

[alt.paranet.paranormal](#)

[alt.paranet.psi](#)

[alt.paranet.science](#)

[alt.paranet.skeptic](#)

[alt.paranet.ufo](#)

[alt.paranormal.channeling](#)

[alt.sci.physics.new-theories](#)

[alt.tarot](#)

[alt.tv.x-files](#)

[alt.tv.weird-science](#)

[alt.ufo.reports](#)

[sci.skeptic](#)

[talk.origins](#)

FROM FROZEN MAMMOTHS TO HITLER'S TESTICLE

Newcomers to UseNet groups are likely to be startled by the array of topics currently under discussion in cyberspace. Here are some selected message titles from three UseNet groups during September and October 1995

sci.skeptics

Dogon Sirius enigma • Nikola Tesla 'The Electric Man'

• Frozen mammoths • Flat Earthers: are there really

any? • Paranormal computing • New Evidence on

Roswell Film • UFOs: proof criteria challenge •

Cold Fusion information available • Ice free

Antarctica • Therapeutic magnets • Indian

Skeptics debunk • Remote Viewing •

Geller in the news • Bumble-bees cannot

fly! • Nostradamus: The Easter

Prophecy • Why Few Female Skep-

tics? • Homeopathy for Dummies •

Rhine, Telepathy, and Science •

Any value in Chinese remedies? •

Ganesh Statue drinking milk? •

'Twin paradox' paradox

alt.misc.fortean

Poltergeist • Sea Monkeys •

Strychnine Bombers tackle Mice •

Strange Laws • Exploding Chick-

ens • Prime Minister defeated by

Alien • Weak Psi • The Night They

landed in Suffolk • Human Flesh

Cook arrested • Dispute at World Fer-

ret Championship • Slurry Tank

Tragedy • Fake Moon Landings • Giant

Wave hits QE2 • Pizza Man kneaded to

Death • Bumper Week for Severed Hands •

How to make a time machine

alt.folklore.urban

Words for Snow • Phone calls

from the dead? • Monkeys

mate with humans... •

Sleeping habits sur-

vey • Disgusting

Food Occurrences

• Lethal Injec-

tions: Sterile? •

Time travel •

Corn Flakes

and Mastur-

bation? • LSD

UL comes to

Polk • Odd

Laws • Nosmo

King • Interest-

ing use of a

word (Ecky

Thump) • Satan-

ists torture cats? •

Vomitorium • Hal-

loween and poi-

soned candy • Hidden

Picture: Red Dog Beer •

Liquid Mercury anyone?

• "Chinese girls cut apart

for organs" • "Sex" in Lion

King • Whoopie Goldberg's eye-

brows • Hitler's testicles.

FORTEAN TIMES ONLINE

ANDY COBLEY of Dundee University's Microcentre describes the attractions of pages he manages on behalf of FT (<http://alpha.mic.dundee.ac.uk/ft/ft.cgi?-1,ft>)

Fortean Times On-Line (FTOL) is the World Wide Web mirror site to this magazine. You will find many of the features of the magazine paralleled at the web site: short stories of the weird, longer investigations, curious images and up-to-date information. You will also find some new things, such as the 'Map of the Weird', the 'Reporting Service' and an exhibition of early photographic curiosities. Like all web sites, there is a growing list of links to other sites, pointing to material we think will interest visiting Forteanes.

Readers of FTOL are invited to keep their eyes out for Fortean news stories around the world and report them via the reporting page. Reporters fill in a simple form with the details of the story (ie. its source and date and of course the story text). Once submitted the story is sent on to the alt.misc.fortean for all the world to see - including FT's editors. The report is also filed in an electronic archive at the web site for later readers to peruse.

Among the information resources held at the site are pages with some background about FT and its creators; the current issue (with detailed contents); available back-issues (with con-

tents); international and home subscription rates; details of books published by FT; and advance details of the FT Un-Convention (when known). All these are updated regularly. Inevitably, there is also an order form.

New features are always being added. Among recent innovations are: a salutation to newcomers informing them of how many people logged on to the site before them that day; 'dynamic pages' that allow the caller to change some elements of the page presentation; a simple questionnaire to help us find out more about our clientele (to help us improve the service); and an experimental chat area in which callers can talk directly to each other live.

We are currently designing an on-line shop bursting with all manner of Fortean materials; the addition of a search engine to the site to allow a search through the 'Reporting Service' archive so readers can find older stories and make interesting connections; and a quick way to send messages direct to the editors (including subscription queries).

And who knows what the future holds as all this has happened in just over a year!

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SAILORS' PIG TALES

Hull trawlermen were ready to brave the perils of the Arctic deep-sea fishing grounds. Yet, says ALEC GILL, these hardy folk were terrified of pigs. An encounter with one of these creatures in any shape or form was a bad omen

There are countless superstitions among Hull's fishing families but the pig taboo is the strongest of all of them.

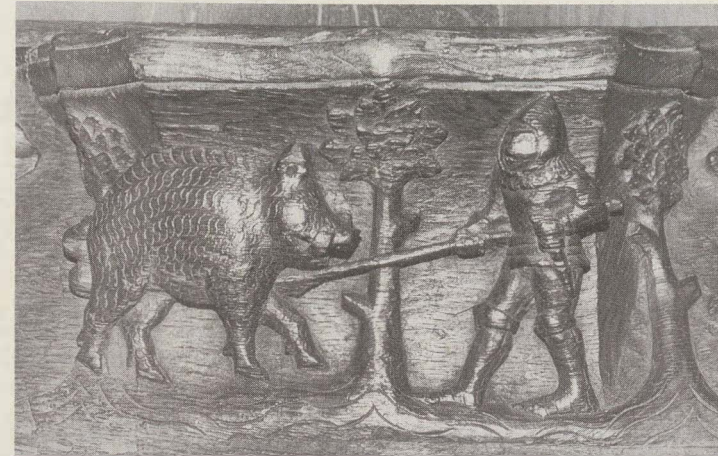
The daughter of a Hull trawler mate recalled that her dad often said: "I'm not scared of man nor beast, apart from grunter", and the power of this ancient folk belief is shown by the lengths some Hull people still take to avoid even uttering the word 'pig'. Acceptable alternatives include Curly-tail, Porker, Grunter, Four-footed Beast, Porky, That Grunting Animal, Parger-Warger (similar to the childhood expression Piggy-Wiggy), Swine, Hog or Sow.

Many people spell it out letter by letter - 'p-i-g' - or disguise it further, such as one woman who says it as 'p-one-g' ('p-1-g'). Others silently mouth each letter; but the best tactic is to avoid the subject altogether.

Yet in spite of the strong aversion to this creature, some families in Hull's Hesse Road fishing community had a pigsty. Only a few, that is, because not many households had a back garden. Neighbours saved stale bread, potato-peelings and left-overs for swill. Children in the street were invited to see new-born, squealing piglets. On market day youngsters were roped in to help herd fully-grown porkers into a cart.

They blocked off passage-ends to head the creatures toward the street while others lined up on the pavement to direct the frightened animals up a ramp (with trawl nets fixed either side) into a waiting cart. Sometimes a hog got free, and mayhem followed as passers-by tried to recapture the runaway.

Peter Anson described in *Fishermen and Fishing Ways* (1932) how 'pig' is a taboo word all around the British coast, especially in Cornwall, Yorkshire and Scotland. He says that "there is no animal more unlucky for fisher-



The fearsome wild boar of Pagan times could well be the source of modern superstitions which surround the pig. This marvellous wood-carving is hidden from view under a choir-stall seat in Beverley Minster.

men" and few put to sea after seeing one. This aspect was observed in Hull.

Dora Wright was donkey-stoning [cleaning] the doorstep one morning in about 1925 when she saw a trawlerman walking by with a sea-bag over his shoulder. Suddenly, a stick-wielding neighbour herded out a hog he was taking to the slaughterhouse. The deckhand stopped dead in his tracks and said: "That's it, I'm not going to sea today." He turned around and went straight back home.

Ernie Clark was adamant that he would have nothing to do with pork on his ship. During 1937 he was in charge of the trawler *Lord Bradbury* (H.251) and had just steamed out of Hull's St Andrew's Fish Dock for a trip to the Arctic waters. The deckhand's first job was to store away the meat on ice in the fish room. Among the provisions for the three-week voyage was a pig's head.

Whether it was a mean trick or merely an accident we may never know; but "Ernie went bloody barmy", a crewman recalls, "no doubt about it". He immediately turned the 338-ton trawler around in the Humber Estuary and headed straight back into the dock before the lock-keeper had a chance to close the gates. Clark refused to sail until the next day.

The *Encyclopaedia of Superstitions* gives the story of a young prankster

threw a sow's tail aboard a Scottish fishing boat as it sailed out of Buckhaven harbour. The ship "instantly turned back and the crewmen refused to sail until the next day" (p.265).

These stories demonstrate both the contradictory nature of superstitions, and the over-riding power of the pig taboo. A universal belief is that "it is unlucky to break a journey or turn back". It is 'tempting fate' to turn or look back - take, for example, the Biblical account of Lot's wife who looked back at Sodom

and Gomorrah and was turned into a pillar of salt (*Genesis* 19:24-26). If this never-turn-back taboo is so imperative, how can it be suddenly over-ridden by coming across a pig - and a dead one at that, as in the case of a head at Hull and a tail at Buckhaven?

Another Hull trawler story relates to the *Macbeth* (H.113). As she steamed off down the Humber in 1948, skipper Ben Henry glanced from the wheelhouse as his men cleared the ship's stores from the open deck. One of their jobs was to unleash a bale of hides which were used to make the covers water-tight when the "hatches were battened down", and to protect the nets from the jagged rocks when trailed along the seabed. But skipper Henry's eagle eye spotted a particular hide which shocked him. A crewman describes how the skipper "went daft, used lots of foul language and ordered the bewildered deckhands to throw a pigskin overboard". After things calmed down, the *Macbeth* continued on her way to the White Sea fishing grounds.

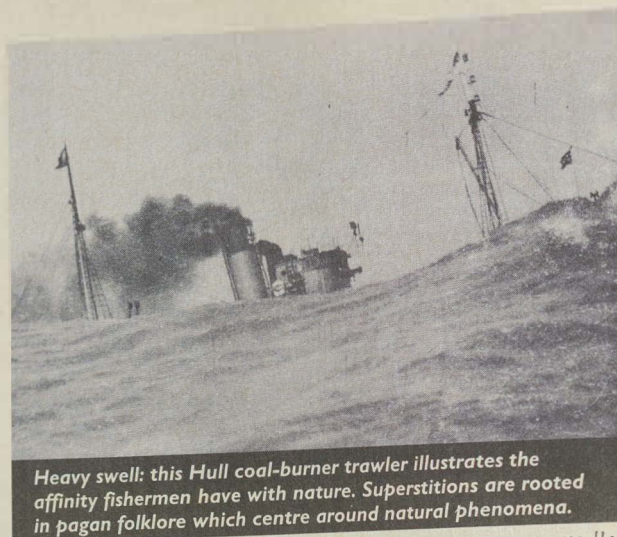
There are other yarns, but a final porky tale relates to the trawler mate John Evans of the *James Barrie* (H.15) in 1960. His skipper was one of the port's top earners, Bernard Stipetic. Every time the mate saw a piece of pork he said: "Here comes some bad luck." One day, while fishing off Iceland,

after a new trawl had been fitted, up came a back leg of pork from the fish room. Evans cursed and swore at this bad omen. Stipetic said: "I'll cure you of this superstition." He cut off the grunter's tail and tied it to the headline of the trawl and shot away. They had not been towing 15 minutes when bang, bang – both warps parted, losing thousands of pounds worth of gear snagged on the rocks. After that, pork was never allowed on board the *James Barrie* again.

ORIGINS OF THE PIG TABOO

No one I have interviewed during 20 years of research knows why this "grunting creature" causes such a profound reaction among Hull trawlermen, or whether their feelings stem from fear or favour.

Over the centuries, pigs have cer-



Heavy swell: this Hull coal-burner trawler illustrates the affinity fishermen have with nature. Superstitions are rooted in pagan folklore which centre around natural phenomena.

tainly entwined themselves deep within the human psyche. Pagans praised the pig from Iceland to Israel and to the Indus. The prehistoric ancestor of the farmyard animal was, naturally, the boar, a wild creature feared for its cunning and vicious ferocity. It was a dangerous quarry and sometimes got the better of the hunter.

In Irish and Welsh myths the pig was worshipped as a god and in The

excellence of the Celts... which has the greatest representational popularity, and one which is used in a wide variety of contexts" (p.390). She described how boar symbols are found throughout the Celtic world on helmets, shields, cauldrons, coins, banners, altars, and in the graves of powerful tribal chieftains. This supernatural animal had a protective 'talismanic significance' for warriors. The pig "con-

Golden Bough (1922) Sir James Frazer detailed its role in Old Europe as a sacred corn spirit. He argued that the Greeks mythologised the pig into the god-figures of Demeter, Attis and Adonis; while for the Egyptians it was associated with Osiris. The boar/pig was central to the Celtic belief system.

In *Pagan Celtic Britain* (1974) Anne Ross showed that "the boar is, without doubt, the cult animal par-

tained all the passions of the Celtic peoples – hunting, feasting, fighting and procreation" (p.404).

As Christianity grew in strength, the boar's status rapidly declined throughout Europe. Nevertheless, old curly-tail craftily foraged his way into British folklore and our coastal fishermen kept porker alive in their enigmatic beliefs.

The Bible gives the pig a poor press. *Leviticus* instructed the children of Israel: "You must not eat their [swine] meat or touch their carcasses, they are unclean for you" (11:7).

The medical argument, sometimes put forward to explain this anti-pork view, is obviously strong. Parasitic tapeworms can infect under-cooked ham (shoulder). Once in the human gut, it can grow over three feet long. Even today there is no direct treatment for cysticercosis. Untreated, the patient goes mad.

The *New Testament* has two main references to hogs. Jesus told his followers not to "cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet" (*Matthew* 7:6). But the most direct Biblical reference which links grunTERS and mariners comes from the story of the Gadarene swine.

Jesus had just stepped ashore in the country of the Gadarenes when a mad man with an 'unclean spirit' fell to his knees before him. The man was possessed by a legion of demons. Christ cast them into 2,000 pigs on a nearby mountain side. Then "the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea and were choked in the sea" (*Mark* 5:1-20).

So here is a clear chain of events which link pigs with drowning and some have claimed that this parable is the source of the grunter superstition; but I doubt if Hull trawlermen paid much heed to the anti-pig views of the Jews and Christians.

The Celts who inhabited the East Riding area, in the rolling Wolds near Hull, belonged to the Parisi tribe. Many of their burial sites north of the Humber have been excavated and a familiar feature of these graves is "the frequent occurrence of pig-bones" (Stead, 1979, p.25).

Although the port of Hull had centuries of maritime history and a long-established whale fishery, trawling was a fluke development. It began with the arrival of Devonshire smack-



Practically every object aboard a trawler has a superstitious association: nets, needles, masts, hatch covers, gallows, food, teapots, the wheelhouse bell. Shipboard taboos are an article in themselves.

men and their families who settled in increasing numbers from 1843 onwards. Opie & Tatum's *A Dictionary of Superstitions* (1989) relates how Brixham fishermen never carried pork to sea (p.307). I suggest that the Celtic practices of the Parisi were reinforced in Hull with the arrival of the smack families and that the pig is a subconscious totem animal of the port's fish-dock community.

Support for the pig-totem view is partly based upon Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (1913). He stated that "the totem animal protects and gives warning to members of its clan... foretells the future... and serves as a guide... sometimes [clan members] are forbidden to touch it, or even look at it; in a number of cases the totem may not be spoken of by its proper name. Any violation of the taboos that protect the totem are auto-

matically punished by severe illness or death" (pp.101-104 - my italics). Given that the tribal totem carried such sacred significance, ordinary mortals would be prohibited from coming into direct contact with it in case it took offence and revenge.

I was recently at Flamborough Head and was told about a young Anglican priest

who had just arrived at this Yorkshire headland, part of the chalky Wolds which juts out into the North Sea. He was keen to mix with his new parishioners and called into The Seabird, a pub used by local fishermen. He walked up to the bar and ordered himself half a pint of beer.

A group of friendly fishermen, about to leave on the next high tide, jocularly called over to him, "Go on, have a pint!" He naively responded, "Oh! No thanks. I don't want to make a pig of myself".

The bar room went deadly silent as everyone looked at the man of the cloth with horror. Many a Flamborough fishing boat did not set sail that day.

ALEC GILL is a folk historian, psychologist, photographer and author of five books about Hull's fishing past - based upon his 20 years research into the community. The latest is "Superstitions - Folk Magic in Hull's Fishing Community" (1993, pb £7.50, Pp174, photos, bib, index; Hutton Press, 130 Canada Drive, Cherry Burton, Beverley, N. Humberside HU17 7SB.)

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Women in Hull's fishing community were restricted by various taboos. When studied closely, many folklore beliefs relate to witchcraft. A fear was that women could control the weather by whistling up a storm at sea. Her common familiar was, of course, the cat.



War time intensifies superstitious rituals. In 1916, this crew were rescued from H.M. Trawler *Rosy Morn* by the Hull vessel *Etna* (H.940). The skipper has a lucky black cat on his lap and the sailor on the floor has a knitted toy white rabbit.

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RECALL TOTALLED

Earlier this year there was a public disagreement between psychiatrists and psychologists over the therapeutic value of memories recovered by hypnosis and related techniques. The issue is crucial to the problem of evaluating extraordinary recollections, be they of abduction by aliens, a past life, survival of death, or of a being a child sex-slave in a satanic cult. MARGARET JERVIS, a journalist with a special interest in the issue, reports.

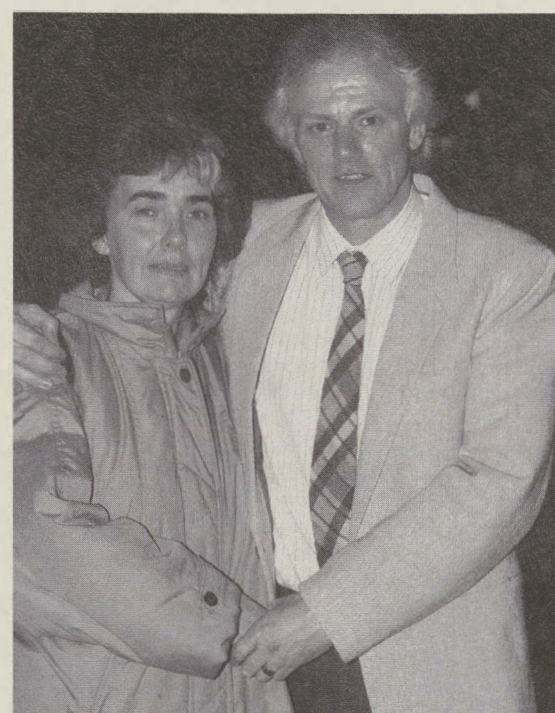
The satanic child abuse (SCA) scare is the Achilles' heel of claims of 'recovered memories' of childhood sexual abuse. The methods used to elicit testimony of satanic victimhood and to uncover alleged buried histories of sexual abuse both rest on essentially similar theories and techniques. These, in turn, are based on the crucial idea that memories of trauma are locked into the body and mind, causing stress symptoms. Once these memories are accessed and articulated, the associated detrimental emotional energy is released and the patient believed cured.

The existence of repressed memories - or their explanatory relative, dissociated trauma - has aroused controversy among mental health theorists and clinicians ever since Freud formulated the idea. Now it marks out a divide within the mental health professions and calls into question the rationale and efficacy of mainstream, as well as fringe, psychotherapies.

The British False Memory Society [1] has on its register more than 600 families who claim to have members falsely accused by other members of sexually abusing them when they were children, the existence of which abuse was unknown prior to therapies of the kind in question.

Sometimes the allegations lead to criminal prosecutions. Earlier this year, a man was acquitted pre-trial of charges of rape, incest and indecent assault when medical records of the complainant revealed the source of the allegations lay in a hospitalisation for bulimia[2]. In a similar case, a father is now serving a long prison sentence and looking to appeal.

It is not just fringe hypno- and past life therapists fuelling the debate. Tacit approval for recovered memory theory



Brian and Pauline Marsh - one of four couples from Bishop Auckland who were cleared of charges of satanic child abuse in January 1995, at Newcastle crown court, when the Crown Prosecution Service conceded that the allegations of devil worship and animal sacrifices were "fantasies".

and techniques has been given by the British Psychological Society (BPS) in a working party report.

In essence, nine out of 10 clinical psychologists surveyed thought recovered memories of abuse were at least sometimes reliable.

While admitting that it was possible for these therapies to induce false memories of abuse, the BPS claimed there was little evidence of a widespread problem in Britain. This incensed psychologist Professor Lawrence Weiskrantz, a leading authority on memory, who wrote to The Times:

"...One would like the BPS judgement that there is no serious problem in Britain to be based not on an off the

cuff opinion but on a serious effort to obtain objective evidence"[3].

Could nine out of 10 psychologists be mistaken? On the scientific evidence, the answer is yes. Empirical studies lend scant support to the practice of recovering repressed memories of abuse. In the USA, Drs Harrison Pope and James Hudson have trawled exhaustively through the literature of sexual abuse and have failed to find a single reliable instance.

Popular culture, though, has dictated otherwise. Drawing on the legacy of Freud, who wrapped repression in scientific clothing [4], the supposed curative value of a sudden retrieval of a lost childhood has inspired a century of creative writing and film making.

In the real world, the lack of scientific rigour and potentially damaging effects of the 'repression' hypothesis lay dormant because Freud later replaced his original concept of the disguising and 'forgetting' of actual sexual assaults in childhood with his theory of incestuous desire - the Oedipus complex.

In the Seventies, radical feminists, intent on highlighting the issue of sexual violence, attacked the male-dominated field of psychoanalysis for attributing memories of abuse to fantasy. In their support, they exhumed Freud's discarded 'seduction' theory - the idea that patients were storing hidden histories of incest - and declared it to be the suppressed 'truth'.

This was only another perversion of the truth. As his case histories reveal, Freud was not told, routinely, by his patients of histories of incest; he led them, through hypnosis, often using enormous pressure, into imagining their existence. The reasoning was circular.

Methods of recovering 'lost' memories are essentially hypnotic. The most potent of these is formal hypnosis – a technique that lends itself to wild and bizarre fantasy – which is often the therapy of choice for alleged satanic abuse survivors and alleged victims of alien abduction.

But the hypnotic nature of many other techniques such as guided imagery, deep relaxation and visualisation is often fudged. The actual method of induction seems to be far less important than its object – establishing a state of uncritical receptivity. Steered by feminism, 'recovered memory' therapy has, over the past 15 years, been prefaced by a reciprocal, reinforcing injunction to both therapist and patient to believe the abuse narratives they are presented with – regardless of whether or not they were apparent prior to therapy.

The resultant stories, often lurid and compelling, may be held with great conviction. Retailled in the media and in 'survivor' books, they lend credence to the belief that there exists a vast, hidden pool of familial incest and provide a launch pad for further claims of satanic child abuse or abduction etc.

Many of the professionals who were behind the scares about sexual and ritual abuse in Cleveland, Nottingham, Rochdale and the Orkneys [5] have actively promoted these memory-recovery therapies among adults.

In 1988, smarting under the criticism in the Cleveland report, paediatrician Dr Marietta Higgs predicted a 'time bomb' of adult survivors. It may be no small coincidence that at the same time ex-Cleveland social worker Sue Richardson was starting to use these techniques in working with adults.

Ironically, it is the fundamentalist Christians, whose convictions of widespread satanism were superimposed on to fears of rampant child sexual abuse, who proscribe the use of hypnosis. They see it as demonically inspired occultism. But Christian counsellors, allegedly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, may be no less gullible than their adversaries.

Many evangelical Satan-hunters turn an heuristically blind eye to secular shortcomings in procuring 'satanic survivors' and have formed an unholy alliance with mental health professionals and feminist rape crisis counsellors through single issue networks. They have no intention of renouncing their messianic intentions. When Christian



Dr. Marietta Higgs: Smarting from criticism in the Cleveland report, she claimed that a 'time bomb' existed of adult survivors of ritual abuse.

evangelical Maureen Davies, prominent in the SCA scares of the late Eighties, visited the US in 1990, she discovered that the most productive source of 'satanic survivors' was the secular affliction called 'multiple personality disorder'.

In 1991 Davies set up a network, the Beacon Foundation, promoting an awareness of satanic abuse among receptive professionals in mental health and the criminal justice system. "Nobody believes the children," she said at the time. "We're going on the adult survivors." Now Davies is working with sexual abuse survivors in the mental health mainstream.

The lure of the satanic abuse theory strikes at the heart of the BPS report. Buried in the survey findings, but not published in the report, is the astonishing statistic that 97 per cent of the polled psychologists believe in the essential accuracy of SCA reports.

One leading member of the working party, NHS psychologist Dr Phil Mollon, has published clinical histories of alleged satanic survivors from his own hospital caseload [6]. In the footsteps of Freud, Dr Mollon led depressed women, who had no memory of past abuse, into an unfolding nightmare of devil worship and ritual murder. Despite protestations of an open mind, he is at pains to believe these stories, and urges the reader to do likewise.

The book, *Treating Survivors of Satanist Abuse* edited by Valerie Sinason, a psychotherapist at the Tavistock clinic, signals the entry of the 'satanic abuse' theory into established mental health services. With no forensic evidence, these assertions rest squarely on the credibility vested in recovered repressed memory theories.

Though unreliable, the seductive power of these memory-narratives focuses attention on the existence and nature of the unconscious. The authors

may tap into memories, not of personal trauma, but of stories subconsciously retained through the influence of popular culture. Under the suggestive baton of the therapist, this storehouse of images provides rich pickings for creative endeavour – as illustrated by past life and alien abduction stories.

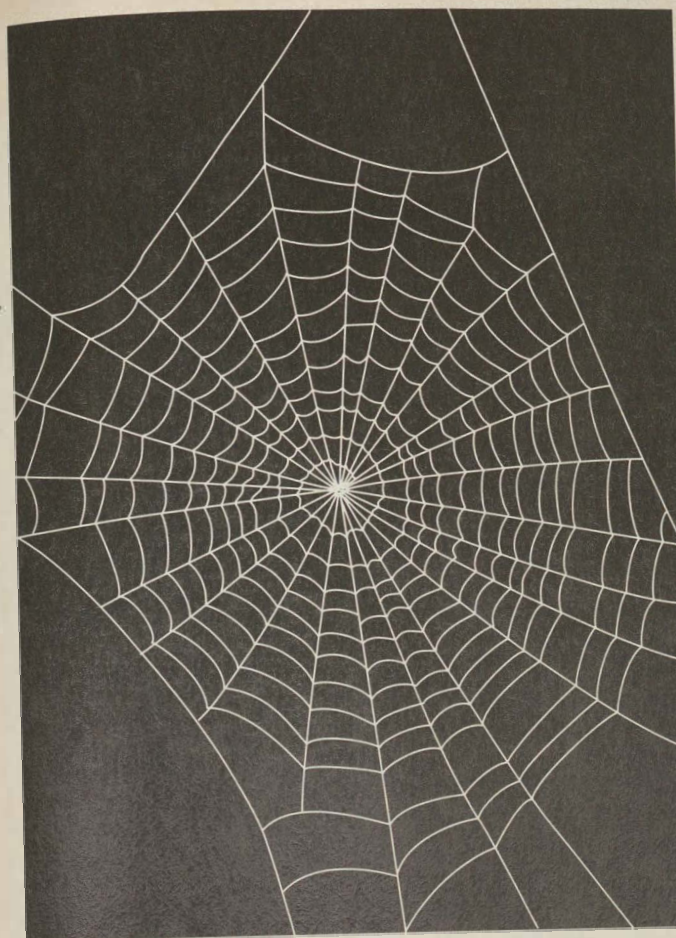
In contrast, the evidence is that traumatic events, far from being repressed, are, barring brain injury, firmly embedded in consciousness, sometimes to the point of unremitting torment as in post-traumatic stress disorder.

With belief in SCA spreading in parallel with the growth of recovered memory survivors, the pressure to uncover SCA covens and networks is intense. Last year at Swansea crown court, 13 people – 11 men and two women – faced trial for their part in an alleged conspiracy to abuse children as part of a paedophile ring. The evidence, gleaned from children under therapy, was redolent of the SCA mythology – the number and constitution of the accused corresponded to a coven. In the event, six men were convicted in the original trial of 12. Campaigners have cited this as evidence of satanic-style ritual abuse. All the convictions are currently under appeal.

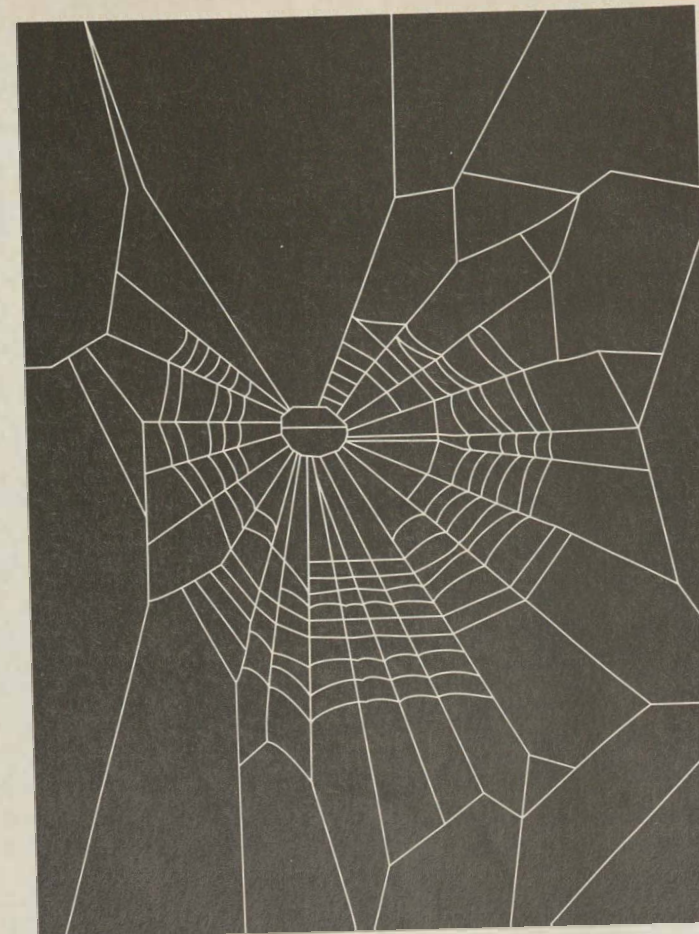
In the 17th century, witch trials prospered under the spell of 'spectral evidence' – the contents of dreams, visions and hallucinations. Similar to the recovered, repressed memories of today, such testimony has routinely and imperceptibly invaded courtrooms over the past five years. Though Satan, in the guise of the Fundamentalists' notion of the demonic nature of man, has yet to make his appearance, his doppelgänger – the feminist's depiction of the demonic nature of man as an incubus – advances apace. For the Satan hunters, it's simply a waiting game.

NOTES

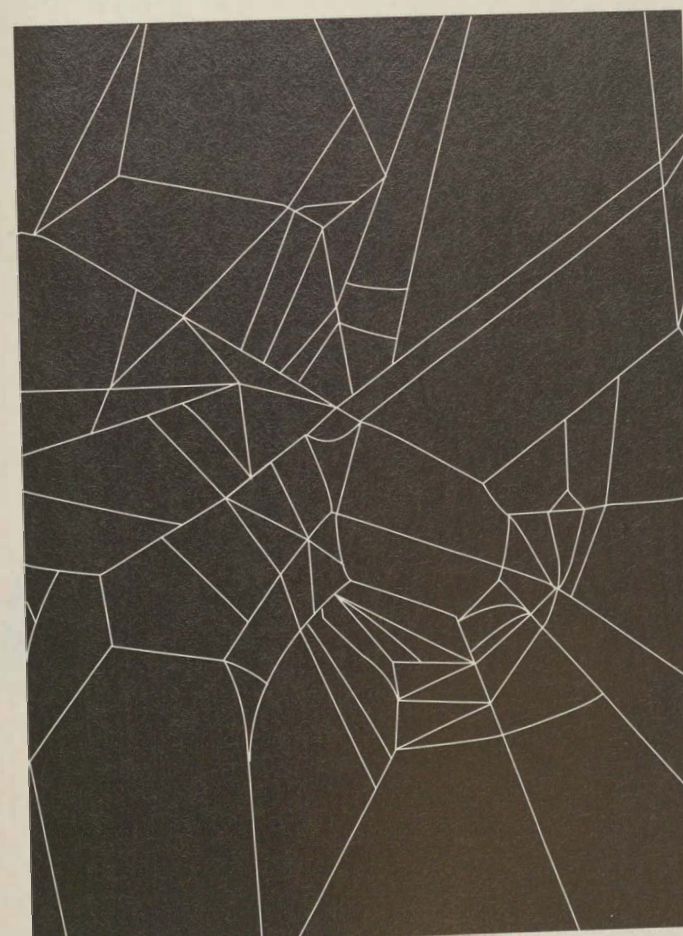
- 1 British False Memory Society, Belcombe Croft, Bradford-on-Avon, Wilts BA15 1NA. Fax: 01225 863262
- 2 *D Mail* 29 March 1995. See also Mike Dash and Bob Rickard, 'American Witch-hunts', *FT* 76:42-44.
- 3 'A therapy under fire', *Times* 11 April 1995, p.14.
- 4 See Jim Schnabel, 'Memories of Hell', *FT* 71:23-32; and Peter Brookesmith, 'Freud's Smoke-screen', *FT* 83:26.
- 5 See summaries in *FT* 57:46-62.
- 6 Phil Mollon, 'The Impact of Evil' in Valerie Sinason, ed., *Treating the Survivors of Satanist Abuse* (Routledge, 1994)



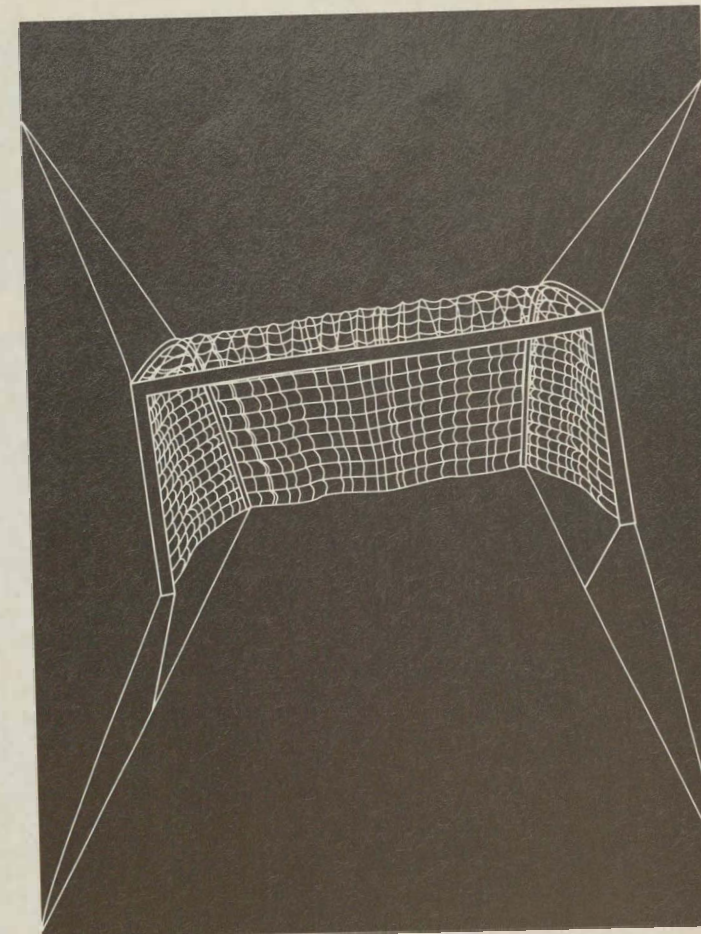
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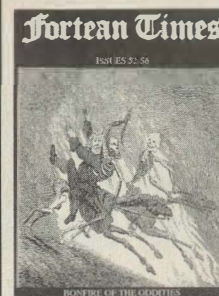
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SECRET COUNTRY

19: LLANDDWYN ISLAND, ANGLESEY

JANET & COLIN BORD guide the way to mysterious places worth a visit in Great Britain

This 'Island' (which is connected to Anglesey by a sandy beach, and only truly becomes an island in stormy weather or when the tide is exceptionally high) takes its name from St Dwyn, a 6th century female saint who became known as the Welsh St Valentine. She was abbess of a religious community on the island, and after her death the place became the centre of a major pilgrimage cult. Her feast day is 25 January.

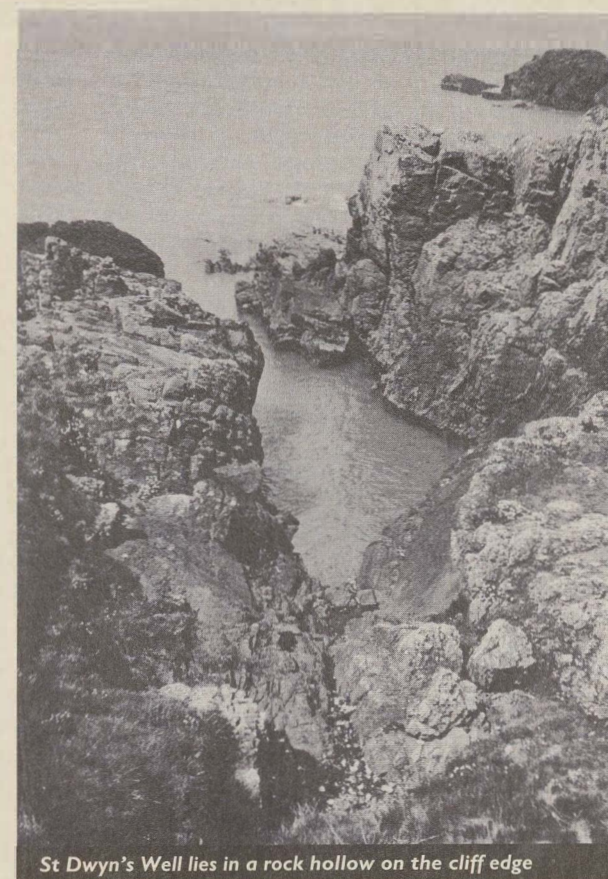
Although the island is small, it is a beautiful place to visit, with rocky cliffs and fine views across the sea to the mountains of Snowdonia. And if you know where to look, you can find several places which feature in the story of St Dwyn.

The reason why Dwyn became a patron saint of lovers can be found in the legend that she fell in love with Maelon Dafodrill, but when she refused "unappropriated union" with him, he abandoned her.

She prayed to God to cure her of her love, and in a dream she received a liquid from Him which, once drunk, cured her completely. Maelon also received the same potion, but he turned into a lump of ice. God granted Dwyn three requests: her first was that Maelon should be unfrozen; her second that all her requests on behalf of true lovers should be granted, so that they would either obtain the objects of their affection or be cured of their passion; her third that she would never wish to be married. After all three requests were granted, she became a saint and lovers who invoked her aid were granted their desire.

The legend seems to be based on fact: according to mediæval records, Dwyn was a Welsh princess who wished to become a nun, and rejected the attentions of the real-life Maelgwyn Gwynedd, who thereafter persecuted Dwyn and her community.

The focus of the love-cult was a well, Crochan Llanddwyn, which is not in fact on the island, nor is it now a well. It is a pool, and



St Dwyn's Well lies in a rock hollow on the cliff edge

can be seen in the forest near Newborough, alongside one of the tracks leading from the village to the island. When the well was in active use, an old woman would predict the lovers' success from the movements of small eels which waved out of the sides of the well, after she had spread the lovers' handkerchief on the water surface. People would also drink from the well, or bathe in it, in the hope of achieving their desire in love.

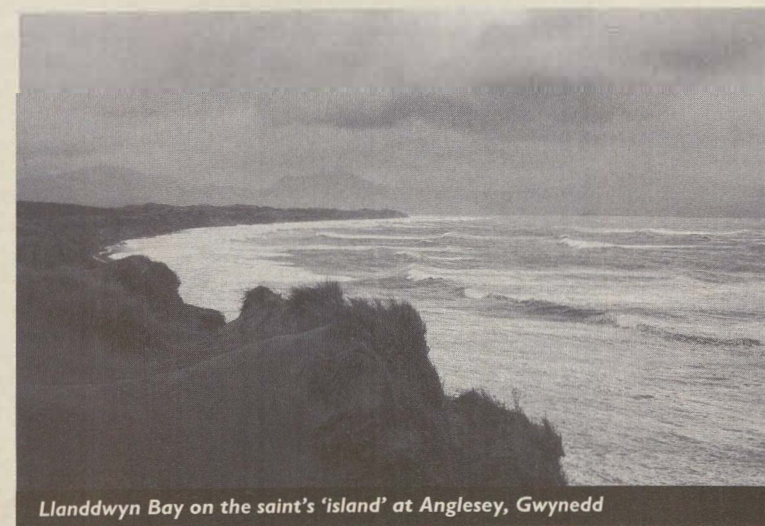
There is also a well, called Ffynnon Ddwynwen (St Dwyn's Well), on the island itself. It is on the cliff edge, and is actually a spring in a natural rock basin and so it is not very easy to find unless you know exactly where to look. It was used for healing purposes, and especially for getting rid of warts, its other name being Ffynnon Dafaden (Wart Well).

Below the well is a cave called "The Cave of the Little Old Woman Churning", this strange name coming from the noise the sea makes when it rushes in and out of the cave at

high tide. Two modern stone crosses, erected in memory of St Dwyn, are prominent features at the centre of the island, along with a ruined mediæval church, where St Dwyn's tomb is said to have been. Sick pilgrims would sleep there in hopes of a cure, and later they slept in the saint's bed which was actually a rock located where the lighthouse now stands. It was also the spot where St Dwyn died, and legend says that she was carried out to look at the sunrise for the last time, but a large rock blocked her view. An angel came

and split it for her, and this divided rock can still be seen on the ridge beyond the church.

Location: Anglesey is an island off north-west Wales (connected by bridges to the mainland), and Llanddwyn Island is off south-west Anglesey, beyond Newborough village. The road to the shore is through pine-forested sand-dunes, where there is a large car park. Once you are on the long sandy beach, you will see the "island" to be a peninsula jutting into the sea. OS ref:SH 386626.



Llanddwyn Bay on the saint's 'island' at Anglesey, Gwynedd

ON THE TRAIL CAUGHT ON THE HOP

A mysterious bout of car trouble put veteran cryptozoologist LOREN COLEMAN on the trail of the Nova Scotia kangaroo

Labels such as the 'New Jersey Devil', as noted here last issue, encompass many forms of lively unknowns. I mentioned, of course, the winged weirdos in some of the classic stories as well as the humanoid forms in modern accounts. Interestingly, both the 1900 'Devil' sighting by Mrs Amanda Sutts of Yardville, New Jersey and, perhaps, the contemporary sighting discussed in this column last issue, can be cross-listed under an entirely different heading: that of the mystery kangaroo.

Sightings of these Australian and New Zealand marsupials out-of-place in North America have intrigued me ever since I investigated the big Midwestern USA flaps of the early 1970s. It became rather common for me to track down cases in Illinois, Indiana and Minnesota. But, throughout the 1980s, reports of kangaroos focused my attention on a seemingly unlikely location: the Canadian island of Nova Scotia. For example, in 1984, George Messinger of Bridgetown spied a "strange" animal and described the beast as about two feet tall, with short front paws, tight to the body, with large back legs and a deer-like head.

"Actually, it looked like a small kangaroo at the time, but I thought that was ridiculous, being in this country," Messinger told the press.

Like all good cryptozoologists with limited budgets, most of my investigations took place through long phone interviews, correspondences and collecting newspaper articles. Two contacts in Nova Scotia, Bob Bancroft, a wildlife biologist, and John Sansom, a folklorist, would keep me up to date on the latest kangaroo sightings.

During August of 1995, I was finally able to travel to Nova Scotia, in pursuit of the latest crypto-roo report. There I found myself the recipient of one of those wonderful 'on-the-road' experiences that often befall those of us who chase after these wild beasts.

A number of sightings clustered around a lake in Antigonish County named Lochaber. That certainly sounded like a good place for an unknown animal and I was surprised the tourist-conscious Nova Scotia media had ignored the potential of headlined stories like "The Lochaber

Monster Makes Another Appearance". But they had, and it had been rather quiet there lately. I was travelling back from Cape Breton Island (the site of some sea and lake monster accounts, but that's another story) and realised that a quick side trip off Route 104 would take me close to Lochaber Lake. I was driving my new sports utility



A footprint left by the Nova Scotia kangaroo

four-wheel drive vehicle which I later learned had been built in the mystically named Indiana town of Lafayette ("little enchantment" / "little fairy"). In the few months since I bought it, nothing had gone wrong – until I headed for Lochaber.

I was watching the road, glancing at the map and cheerfully talking to my boys Malcolm and Caleb who were along for the trip when, all of a sudden, the gauge for oil pressure started bouncing up and down like, yes, a kangaroo. I had never seen anything like it in any of the cars and small trucks I had owned.

But there it was. I was about 10 miles from Lochaber on a hilly and winding road and my transportation



This Polaroid photograph, taken in April 1978 near Waukesha in Wisconsin, seems to show a kangaroo. Loren Coleman investigated such sightings throughout the 1980s.



was having fits. I hightailed it back to Stewart's Auto Body Shop, which we passed earlier, hoping they could sell me some oil. That done, I was pouring it into the engine when I walked a man with a friendly manner.

It turned out to be Hugh Stewart, the owner. We chatted for a while about the problem before casually asking me about my reason for being in these parts. I carefully mentioned my interest in "animal folklore" (since most people are unfamiliar with the term cryptozoology) and I said I was on my way to Lochaber Lake where a kangaroo-like animal was sighted.

Mr Stewart immediately told me that the lake would be too far south as, indeed, the animal had been seen, by an old school-friend of his, near Gaspereaux Lake, just down the road from the auto shop. He added that he had been with his friend Hugh MacLean and biologist Bob Bancroft when they all had found tracks after returning to the location of the encounter. (Mr Stewart did not know that I knew about Mr Bancroft's involvement or that I was aware of many details of Mr MacLean's sighting.) In his gravel driveway, he outlined the shape of the footprint. I realized, at once, that it matched that of a kangaroo and was similar to the one photographed and described in October, 1986.

Apparently, the frozen ground had frustrated all efforts to search for the beast. I spend some pleasant moments with Mr Stewart who very matter-of-factly told me of his experiences and directed me to the spot where the kangaroo had been seen.

I looked at those kangaroo-related places, but the real high point of the day was over; this was the chance meeting with an unassuming man who had been there and who had taken his time to make the event live again for me. It is this kind of coincidental encounter that makes such field trips worthwhile.

By the way, Mr. Stewart, mechanic extraordinary, could find nothing wrong with my truck and could not understand why it acted up just as I was passing Gaspereaux Lake, sending me back to his door.

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DIARY OF A MAD PLANET JUNE TO SEPTEMBER 1995

A record of the geophysical highlights of our planet – the tempests and tantrums, the oddities and extremities

OZONE HOLE

The ozone hole over the southern hemisphere has doubled in size in the last year and is now as big as Europe, according to the UN's weather agency.

Levels over Europe and North America have also dropped 10 to 15 per cent since depletion began in the 1980s. "Every one per cent drop in ozone means roughly 1.3 to 1.5 per cent more ultraviolet radiation reaching the surface," said spokesman Rumen Bojkov.

LIGHTNING

HONDURAS: 3 June

Lightning struck a crowd of soccer fans in the northeast town of Puerto Lempira, killing 17 and injuring 35. Eleven died instantly and another six later at a local clinic. All but one of the victims were Miskito Indians.

TOAD PLAGUE

RUSSIA: 22 June

Thousands of toads invaded the village of Kazatskoye in the Belgorod region near the Ukrainian border. There was a similar invasion in the summer of 1943, just before a major battle with the Nazis. In July, 350,000 acres of southern Ukraine were invaded by grasshoppers of the *Prus Italian* species and silkworms devoured forests along the SW coast of the Crimea.

HEATWAVE

USA: 13-20 July

While Britain had the driest summer since rainfall records began in 1727 and the hottest since 1976, one blistering week in July killed more than 738 people in USA, including 469 in the concrete-and-tarmac furnace of Chicago (rising to 568 by late August). Most of the victims were poor and elderly. This was the worst disaster ever to hit the Windy City; the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 claimed only 250 lives.

Roads cracked, bridges buckled and air conditioners collapsed in temperatures consistently above 100F and suffocating humidity. Chicago's Cook County morgue had room for only 220 corpses and the overflow had to be kept in 10 refrigerated trucks in the parking lot. The early warning sign came from Iowa on 12-17 July, where oven-like air felled tens of thousands of livestock.

EARTHQUAKE

CHILE: 30 July

(23.4S 70.2W) 7.8R, 33km down. Centred on the northern port city of Antofagasta, wedged between the Pacific and towering desert cliffs, this quake was felt strongly throughout the country and as far away as Buenos Aires. At least three people were killed and 14 injured. Substantial damage occurred in Cerro Moreno, Mantos Blancos and Baquedano.



A Royal Navy helicopter flies around Montserrat's smouldering volcano

ERUPTION

MONTERRAT: 22 August

Volcanic rumblings in Chance's Peak, Soufriere Hills, led to the evacuation of 5,000 people (almost half the population) from the southern end of the tiny Caribbean island, 11 miles by seven. Half the evacuees found beds with relatives in the safe northern third of the island; it is said that all islanders belong to just 11 families. Plymouth, the capital, was deserted as black ash rained down and day turned to night.

On 18 July, small steam explosions had announced Soufriere Hills' first activity for at least 350 years. Rumbling continued up to 30 August, but at the time of writing the expected major eruption has not materialised.

WAVES

NORTH ATLANTIC: 11 September

The liner QE2 was hit by a 95ft wave as she travelled at four knots through the tail of Hurricane Luis off Newfoundland on her way to New York. The wave hit the ship bow on, the crest reaching bridge level. "It was the biggest I have seen in 38 years at sea," said Captain Ronald Warwick, 54.

Several 100ft waves, around twice the height of those usually seen during hurricanes, have occurred during Atlantic storms recently. The first were measured by meteorological buoys about 200 miles south of Nova Scotia around Halloween 1991 and again in the same area in March and December 1993. These are 50 per cent larger than so-called "100-year waves", so large that there is only a one per cent chance of one in any given year.

The North Atlantic is certainly getting rougher. By the end of the 1980s, the average wave height was 50 per cent higher than during the 1960s, while average wind speeds remained steady. The phenomenon is not understood. Oil rigs in the North Sea are now built with longer legs than those built in the 1970s.

Guardian, 27 Aug; *New Scientist*, 29 Aug 1992; *Victoria (BC) Times-Colonist*, 16 Dec 1993; *Guardian*, 4 May; *Atlanta Journal*, 7 May; *Glasgow Herald*, 16 Sept 1995. See FT52:8.

FLOODING

THAILAND: 30 September

Speedboat crews with electric prodgers, fishing nets and rifles searched for at least 300 crocodiles that escaped from flooded reptile farms. The hunt spread to Bangkok after unconfirmed sightings of 10ft crocs in a suburb where dogs have recently disappeared. There about a million farmed crocs in the country. The escapes could be a boost for the dwindling number of wild river crocs.

Thanks to the Global Seismology Group of the British Geological Survey for the earthquake data.

SAINT'S DAY ALMANAC DECEMBER 1995 TO JANUARY 1996

Compiled by Paul Sullivan and Quentin Cooper

1 DECEMBER: ST ELOI'S DAY

Judging by the current trends, 6th century St Eloi must be considered a failure. He endeavoured to eradicate fortune telling, belief in omens, and the observance of Thursday as a holy day (in honour of the god Jupiter). One out of three is not very impressive.

4 DECEMBER: ST BARBARA'S DAY

St Barbara is the patron saint of detonations. She assumed this honour after her father exploded as divine retribution for handing his daughter over to pagan authorities. There are no dates (and no truths) in this legend.

13 DECEMBER: ST LUCIA'S DAY

St Lucia plucked out her eyes in order to dissuade an amorous suitor. She was later reinvented as a saint of fire and light to offset the pagan winter fire festivals, and Scandinavian girls still don crowns of candles to mark the day. St Lucia's Eve is a night when fairies and witches are abroad.

30 DECEMBER: ST EGWIN'S DAY

St Egwin was overseeing the building of Evesham Abbey in Hereford and Worcester in the 8th century when Satan dropped by and hurled a missile at the embryonic building. But Egwin deflected it with a prayer and the projectile landed on Warwickshire, forming Meon Hill, which has since acquired a ghost or two.

7 JANUARY: ST BRANNOC'S DAY

After sailing from Wales to Devon in a stone coffin, reanimating a butchered cow, and curing all manner of sick animals, 6th century St Brannoc was the man who introduced the plough to Devon, so they say.

8 JANUARY: ST NATHALAN'S DAY

7th century Scottish St Nathalan was the Houdini of his day. He once locked his hand and leg together, went on a somewhat uncomfortable pilgrimage to Rome and produced the key from inside a freshly caught Italian fish.

16 JANUARY: ST SIGEBERT'S DAY

Miracles were notably absent when St Sigebert, King of East Anglia in the 7th century, rode into battle against King "Psycho" Penda of Mercia. Sigebert was armed with a stick, as he refused to carry arms. His army was slaughtered.

19 JANUARY: ST CANUTE'S DAY

St Canute is, indeed, that 11th century king who got his feet wet on the beach.



Canute commanded the waves to halt in order to demonstrate the supremacy of God's laws over the futile will of men. And yet posterity has misinterpreted and cited the incident as an example of arrogance and folly.

22 JANUARY: ST VINCENT OF SARAGOSSA'S DAY

Fourth century martyr St Vincent of Saragossa is patron saint of drunkards. If his feast day is fine and bright, the year's wine crop will be bountiful. If murky and unpleasant – as it was in 1995 – then it's dodgy house whites all round.

29 JANUARY: ST JULIAN THE ALMSGIVER'S DAY

St Julian the Almsgiver fulfilled a prophecy – spoken by a deer – that he would kill his parents. He mistook them for his wife and her lover and sliced them in two. As penance he opened a hospital and did many good deeds; or, rather, he would have done had these stories not been unsubstantiated apocrypha.

STRANGE SHIRTS

The Roswell Incident



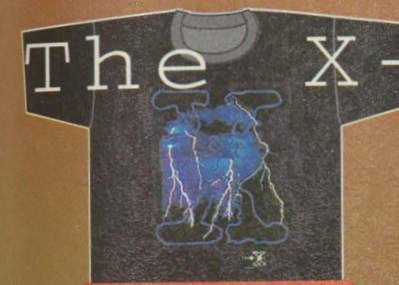
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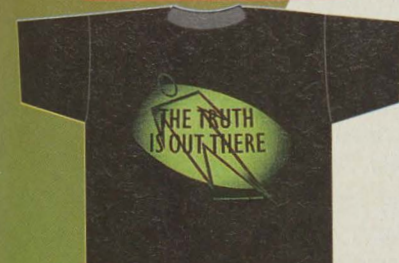


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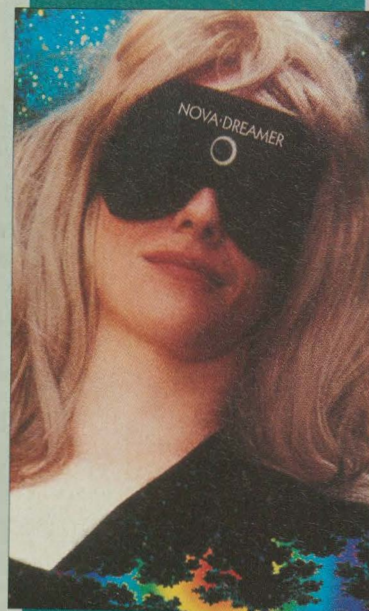
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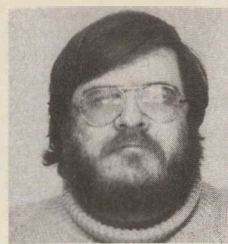


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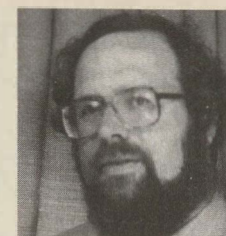
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FORUM



CRYPTOZOLOGY:
Jonathan Downes is a rock musician and one of Britain's few professional cryptozoologists. He is the director of the Centre for Fortean Zoology and editor of *Animals & Men*.



SYMBIOSIS:
Kevin McClure is a social worker in Yorkshire and has edited a succession of magazines (*Common Ground*, *Alien Scriptures* and *Promises and Disappointments*).

CRYPTOZOLOGY BORN TO BE WILD

Do wild men roam the south-west of England? Jonathan Downes considers the evidence

Although some accounts of shambling, hairy man beasts from various parts of the world are evidence that there are several species of higher primate presently unknown to science, some such sightings are of a far less tangible phenomenon usually known as BHM (Big Hairy Men).

When such phenomena are seen in a country where it is reasonable to suppose that unknown primates could survive, they have been described as "Bigfoot" or "Wildmen", but in areas such as the south-west of England, with no logical zoological explanation in sight, other excuses are made and other explanations given.

The region has a long and dishonourable tradition of tales about feral people. Some have been shown to be fallacious or irrelevant. The "Cannibals of Clovelly" were a local myth based loosely upon the similar (and probably folkloric) tale of the Scottish wild man "Sawney Bean" and his family who were supposedly executed in nasty ways for cannibalism and general barbarism during the 15th century. The myth was spread by a local landowner intent on keeping the curious away from the site of his highly lucrative tobacco-smuggling business.

R.D. Blackmore described a tribe of lawless vagabonds in *Lorna Doone* (which incidentally had another episode of interest to the Fortean zoologist with a sub-plot loosely based around the legendary White Bird of Oxenham Manor). "The Doones", although based on fact, were merely a tribe of highly organised criminal outlaws. Even within the past 300 years there have been strong traditions of tribes of naked wild men living in the wilder and most remote parts of Dartmoor, and one tribe of well documented semi-wildmen lived in the parish of Nymet Rowland for about 200 years.

There are other phenomena whose nature seems far more analogous to some of the stranger BHM reports

from around the world. The Devon folklorist Theo Brown collected a number of such stories including one chilling recollection by a friend of hers who had been walking alone at dusk near the neolithic earthworks at the top of Lustleigh Cleave on the extreme eastern side of Dartmoor.

Lustleigh Cleave is a strange place. It appears to be a "window area" where an inordinate number of unexplained incidents and anomalous phenomena seem to take place with almost monotonous regularity. I have reports of sightings of a ghostly Tudor hunting party, mysterious lights in the sky, and even the apparitions of a pair of Roman centurions. Theo Brown's friend clearly saw a family of "cave men", either naked and covered in hair or wrapped in the shaggy pelts of some wild animal, shambling around the stone circle at the top of the cleave. Another report, also from the south-west, came from a man (later a big game hunter in Africa) who saw a creature at the Hangley Cleeve barrows in Somerset which he described long after the sighting as the most terrifying thing he had ever seen. He described it as a "crouching form like a rock with matted hair all over it and pale, flat eyes". I have other reports from that area of hulking man-shaped shadows seen in a local quarry.

I am not suggesting for one moment that there is a relict population of *Homo erectus* waiting on the genetic sidelines, but would maintain that such apparitions fall firmly into the category of BHM sightings worldwide.

Other anomalous phenomena from the region, presently classed elsewhere amongst the pantheon of Fortean phenomena, are primate ghosts like the Ghost Ape of Marwood in Devon and "Martyn's Ape" of Athelhampton in Dorset. I would suggest that although they are explicable within the terms of purely regional folklore as "ghosts", they exhibit characteristics analogous

to those of smaller BHM phenomena across the USA.

Unlike their American cousins, these British phenomena each have a convenient folk story to explain their presence in the occult infrastructure of the region. The Ghost Ape of Marwood was once the pet of a local landowner. One day it grabbed the landowner's young son and climbed a tree with him, refusing to come down. "Martyn's Ape" is supposed to have its origins in the unfortunate pet of a female scion of the Martyn family which was either accidentally walled up alive during building work, or entombed when the daughter either committed suicide in a locked, secret room, or was walled up by an unforgiving parent (depending on which account you read). Were these stories invented by local people to explain the sightings of monkey-shaped apparitions or small BHM that had been seen locally since time immemorial?

In 1978 three young boys exploring the woods near Kings Nympton in Devon saw a large ape or bear-like creature with green cat-like eyes, broad shoulders and a large muzzle. There are a number of stories from the region usually described as being the ghosts of bears either slaughtered in the barbaric sport of bear-baiting (outlawed as recently as the 19th century), or sometimes the ghosts of dancing bears from eastern Europe and the Middle East which were paraded around country fairs until relatively recently.

There are also a number of reports of (sometimes tail-less) black mystery cats of considerable size which have been seen walking along on their hind legs. Several authorities on cryptozoology have cited the undoubted fact that pumas do, on occasion, walk for very short distances on their hind legs, but I am fairly sceptical. I would place the reports of both bipedal puma and ghostly bears firmly within the category of BHM zooforn phenomena.

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SYMBIOSIS

WE CAN ALL SWING TOGETHER

Kevin McClure looks at the mutual dependence of investigators and investigated

There are marvellous examples of symbiosis in the world of anomalous and paranormal events. For instance, there are the human beings who make crop circles, and the human beings who investigate them. These two groups might initially seem to have nothing in common but are each made content – and kept busy – by the activities of the other.

There are the people who create the lights that drift over the sea at Gulf Breeze and their UFO-believing counterparts who stand watching on the beach, their beliefs fuelled and satisfied by those same lights. Then there are those who control the funding for 'scientific' psychical research, and those who apply for and accept it, joined in an unwritten commitment to inaction and inconclusiveness.

Spiritualism, too, has its own compact. Mediums stand in churches and supply vague trivia from the lives of the dead, but are seldom if ever able even to relate the full name of the spirit person they apparently see before them. Those who wish to hear evidence of survival have gradually become accustomed to this weak shadow of proof.

There are other examples. Crystal healing, channelling and regression into past and future lives come to mind as services that meet no standard of evidence in their demonstration and whose customers demand none in their delivery. Financial considerations aside, the relationship is still broadly symbiotic, harms neither participant in the transaction and presumably promotes some form of happiness. However, this balance is not universal.

In FT83, Peter Brookesmith

launched a thoroughly justified attack on the conduct of the most prominent collectors and developers of the supposed recall of UFO abduction experiences. In the instances he recounts (and there are others even weirder) the investigator/witness relationship – traditionally based on an assumed law of supply and demand in which the witness wants a rational explanation and the investigator supplies it – becomes perverted. The witness can be put at substantial risk, psychologically, socially, and in their ability to deal effectively with real life.

I approach the abduction issue from a standpoint of disbelief. I simply cannot accept that any physically real, tangible, objectively visible abduction event has ever, I mean ever, taken place. As time goes on, the verifiable evidence presented by Brookesmith's 'HJM' – Budd Hopkins, David Jacobs and John Mack – has dwindled to nothing, while the quantity of investigator-assisted subjective testimony has grown from a steady trickle to a raging torrent.

The way that the 'abductees' are handled, publicised, cross-matched and, frankly, led into all variety of illusions, is horrifying. But these people aren't dragged off the streets; they don't approach any of these well-advertised investigators without knowing pretty much the process they are likely to go through. So, why do they do it?

It's not for money. Though there is some cash to be had, it generally stays with 'HJM' and their ilk. I don't think it's because the abductees are confident that they have actually been abducted, hybridised with alien stock,

and made the victims of abuse on a cosmic scale. Supposedly, when they make contact with 'HJM' etc, they don't yet know those things. The basis of the abductee/investigator relationship is that the investigator has the power to break down the blocks on memory imposed by the aliens, and only then does the proof come gushing out.

I doubt that all these people suffer identifiable psychiatric illnesses, though the day may come when claiming recall of abduction events is recognised as an inability to deal with reality that between the years 1970 to, say, 2005, took this particular form.

But if abductions are not physical, objectively perceptible events and Earth hasn't recently been invaded by aliens with gross behaviour patterns, can we identify abductees with any other social group who, in the past, demonstrated similar needs and ways of dealing with them?

Are they the same personality types as those many people who, a couple of centuries ago, entered convents to become the Brides of Christ, or monasteries to become, well, whatever monks became (and still do so in other cultures where abductions never seem to happen)? They gained the security of a separate, distinct community, based on a relationship with non-human intelligence not shared by most of humanity, an authoritarian command structure offering them support and confirmation for their beliefs and experiences, and the opportunity of approval if those experiences continued. It's just an idea at this stage. I'd be interested in knowing what FT readers think of it.



DEAR FT...

TOMATO MAN

Following your feature on alleged photographs of aliens [FT80:22-26], I would like to add a few comments regarding Willard McIntyre's photographs (there are two) of a burned 'alien' corpse (aka 'Tomato Man'). Having worked with McIntyre in the field (including a trip to Cascade Mountains in Washington State to investigate Bigfoot), I believe he perpetrated several other hoaxes, including an incredible story out of Rome, Ohio.

Regarding Tomato Man, one can clearly see that this is a human in a light airplane crash. Clues include the frames of flight glasses on the left of the photograph, a six-sided hex nut, tubular piping, angle iron and various welded areas. There are also two conductor electrical cables hanging over the burned head.

Furthermore, according to testimony from Dr Bruce Macmillan, Chief of Staff of the Cincinnati Burns Institute, the swelling of the head and body without any noticeable facial features is simply due to extreme heat flash.

McIntyre claimed to have been a photographer for the US Navy. If this were the case, he would have had considerable access to air disasters.

Ron Schaffner
Milford, Ohio
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A RINGING SUCCESS

In July 1970 our youngest son Neil, then 15, was on a bursary at Millfield. His school had arranged a camping trip for his class at a site somewhere in the South of France and as I and the rest of the family were also due a holiday I closed down my bakery business and arranged to meet Neil at the end of his holiday outside the RAC Centre in Paris, so that he could then have a week's holiday with the rest of us before returning to school.

As it happened, our other son, Edward, who was then 20, suddenly developed acute appendicitis. We had to delay our holiday and were unable to rendezvous with Neil as planned; our problem was that we had no idea how or where to contact him. All we knew was that the camp site was near a village called Vallon but that wasn't enough for us to trace him.

I contacted the International Telephone Exchange and they told me they'd try and trace the area and find out if

anyone knew of an English school camping down there. Within an hour they rang back, telling me they'd discovered it. It was a small village but they'd obtained the number of a small café in Vallon which they suggested I ring.

This I did and within moments I heard someone answer so I said, "Hello, can you speak English, I'm trying to trace someone." The person on the other end said, "Oh, I'm English, who are you looking for?" So I told them my name and my son's name too. After a long pause I said, "Are you still there?" and the answer came, "Is that you dad? It's Neil here."

I was astounded, to say the least. I learned that my son and a number of his friends had become friendly with the woman who owned the café and often spent hours there. When the phone had rung the woman, out of the blue, had asked Neil to answer it! Neither I nor any of my family have ever had any experience of telepathy.

George Whiting
Bath

A TRIP TO BODMIN

On 14 August, my friend and I went to visit Goodaver Stone Circle (OS: SX2087 7515) which the *Earth Mysteries Guide to Bodmin Moor and North Cornwall* calls "a real focal centre".

Looking at the Ordnance Survey map, we picked a more direct route than suggested by the booklet and found ourselves parked by the gate with the "Wild Big Cats – Keep Out" sign on it – the one that's been in all the papers lately.

There is no public right of way to the circle; it is obstructed by the barbed wire and "Keep Out" signs of the be-sideburned Goodaver farmer who has lost all those sheep to the Beast of Bodmin.

Taking the more circuitous route via Trezibbett Farm, as suggested by the *Guide*, we got to the circle and conducted our ceremonial activity as planned. In the field below the circle we found the freshly severed leg of a sheep, but no other sign of an injured or dead animal. The Goodaver site is very close to Potters Museum at Jamaica Inn, Bolventor – an excellent

spooky Victorian collection [see FT81:29]. The circle has ley alignments with Brown Willy, the highest hill in Cornwall (or Kernow as we call it). Our Irish correspondent informs us that in Gaelic "Bodmin" means "smooth penis". "Bodmin Moor" means "long smooth penis". The implications of this for the Beast of Bodmin I leave to your imagination.

Nigel Ayers
Lostwithiel

BALA BEASTS

Referring to the article about Lake Bala [FT82:14], I've made a few visits to the lake. About 12 years ago the car park attendant at the lakeside told me he'd once witnessed an animal swim from one side of the lake to the other. "It was as long as three dogs swimming together," he told me, and resembled a hump protruding from the water. At the tourist information centre they treated it as a joke: "We decry it in Bala," they said.

About five years ago I asked again at the same tourist centre where the woman on duty said that someone fishing "keeps seeing something". I pressed her as to what it was and she said, rather embarrassed, that it was a hump. She thought it was a large pike.

Paul Thomas
Avon

TELL IT TO THE BIRDS

I recently wrote to you about telepathy with our feathered friends and after much encouragement I found to my delight it appears to be the norm – including the caged species. It seems that after you have gained their friendship you are able to communicate using mental images. They can spell their thoughts. How can I explain it? Perhaps like a smoke ring from a cigarette, the letters are there for a few moments then they are gone.

And now for the unbelievable. I again tried telepathy but this time with a bumblebee with no response. I again tried telepathy with a moth; this time success. "To be". I again tried, this time: "Not". Is it true the brain of a moth glows red? I hope to attempt telepathy with a moth at a later date, perhaps we are looking for aliens in the wrong direction.

P.S. The only two words I ever use are "Hello friend".

Brian Speight
Middlesbrough



SATANISM AND ROCK

Quite some time ago I stumbled upon David Tame's *The Secret Power of Music* in my local library. As one who has both *Never Mind the Bollocks* and *The Rite of Spring* in my record collection, I recall being both amused and astonished by this work, which lined up Stravinsky alongside the Sex Pistols and told me that both of these were "dissonant" (ie. out of keeping with European academic notions of harmony, as are most forms of music throughout the world) and therefore very, very bad for me. Mr Tame states, somewhat defensively, that "writing on the negative influences of some rock music... provokes a pile of opposing letters" [FT82:50].

Let me run that by you again: The Sex Pistols and Stravinsky, to name but two. If that's "some rock music" what are we supposed to listen to? OK, so maybe the Stones, KISS, Yoko et al were all accused (by not-entirely-disinterested third parties, I might add), of dabbling in "witchcraft". There is even (whisper it) the possibility that Keith Richards et al were winding up journalists. The only thing remotely Fortean in Tame's article is the "Kenneth Anger sighting". Anita Pallenberg's "placing a curse" on a young man who "subsequently died" is of no value, as no doubt he would have "subsequently died" anyway, like the rest of us. Precisely how did he "subsequently die"?

Carlton B. Morgan
Newport

Having a burning interest in both music and the occult, I was thrilled to find an article which apparently dealt with both [FT82:49-50]. However, as David Tame seemingly falls into his own trap of quoting and alluding to "hysterical... Christian fundamentalist" texts, I find it necessary to offer another view.

Tame constantly equates Satanism with Witchcraft (or Wicca), confounding horned Satan with the horned god of the pagans. The similarity is anything but coincidental, of course, being a highly orchestrated publicity stunt by the mediæval church.

The sweeping generalisations made throughout the piece included revelations of lovers in covens, talismans and secret potions. While I am not about to fall into a similar trap, claiming that all Wiccans really have good intentions, neither am I willing to accept that they are all sinister maniacs who slaughter animals at will and summon demons at cocktail parties. There are good and bad covens, just as there are good and bad churches and religions. The power summoned during ceremonies is simply that – neither good nor evil, but potentially both. Of course, some people do choose to practice the "black arts", but to

say all Wiccans have the same values as those few is frankly ridiculous.

The one specific coven Tame chose to name, that of Maxine Sanders and her late husband Alex, is not connected with the "black arts" or Satanism. Alex himself denounced such practices and the coven is now recognised as stemming from the Gardnerian tradition. A plagiarist and joker he may have been, but his practices and intentions were strictly "white". Furthermore, Aleister Crowley, although usually touted by popular sources as the archetypal "black magician", did give to the Wiccan religion many important texts. These were heavily clouded with the nonsense his wickedly provocative sense of humour and extravagant life-style attracted both in himself and in others, but they remain largely definitive texts.

Tame also asks how Keith Richards knows of some "black magicians" who thought they (the Stones) were acting "as unknown agents of Lucifer". I imagine that at some point every group as successful as the Stones will attract people who, for some reason or another, interpret their music as being the work or message of the dark forces (Charles Manson and The Beatles, for example). Surely the common knowledge of music and human nature points to this, not necessarily any sinister personal experience.

I am not defending all Wiccans or indeed all musicians. There are obviously some people who feel they have a lot to gain by working with the dark forces (such as the Norwegian "Inner Circle"), but not everyone in either field should be "tarred with the same brush".

Christine Wood
Dewsbury

David Tame states that Marc Bolan "apparently spent two of his teenage years living with and studying under a black magician in Paris. One of Bolan's earliest songs, 'The Wizard', was about this black magician, and became a hit". According to Simon Napier-Bell, Bolan's manager in the mid to late 1960s, "[Bolan] told me his parents were French [and] that he had been born in France... also, while he was in Paris he'd met a wizard who could levitate himself and make magic potions from rats' feet

and lizards. Marc had lived with him for a year, learning the secrets of witchcraft. The truth was, one Friday night Marc had gone to Paris for the weekend and met a gay conjurer who'd invited him back for the night. By Monday morning Marc was back in London and all the rest was fantasy." (*Marc Bolan – Born To Boogie*, Simon Napier-Bell and Chris Welch, Eel Pie Publishing, 1982).

Marc's parents were from London, and he was born in Hackney Hospital. 'The Wizard' was Marc's first single (released in 1965) but it was not a hit. Over the following five years he released numerous records, achieving only three minor hits. He didn't have any major success until the end of 1970, with the single 'Ride A White Swan'.

Erikh Cork
Leeds

Does David Tame have a roving commission from the Spanish Inquisition? Commenting on Keith Richards' suggestion that certain "black magicians" believed the Rolling Stones to have been "unknown agents of Lucifer" he then asks a question worthy of any Cardinal Fang: "How did he know? Did he know them?" Does Tame really believe that Richards had never read any of the rumours that had circulated about his band in fanzines, the underground press and other media for years? Does he believe that Richards had never read any of the, no doubt countless, crank letters most rock musicians receive, or that he had not had this allegation mentioned to him by friends, journalists and others? The fact that Richards was aware of the rumours is all the man admitted – and if there is anything diabolical in that it is Tame's unholy implication.

Tame then proceeds to link Black Sabbath with Alex and Maxine Sanders. Did he mean to write Black Widow (who not only had a connection with the gruesome two-some, but openly acknowledged it), or did he choose Black Sabbath because the latter are the more famous?

Linking Sabbath with Sanders was either a typographical error or deliberate mischief-making, as the band's lyrics have been about as much an advocacy of Satanism as have the collected works of Postman Pat. Even then, quite how he makes the conceptual leap from Satanism to so-called Alexandrian witchcraft to "evil" is also a feat worthy of the "the Holy Office".

Tame, like other commentators on this subject, seems to be trying to de-contextualise rock music from the rest of 1970s society, which can't be done. The Seventies were drenched in popularised occultism, so it is small wonder that some musicians were aware of it and influenced by it and that they reflected this in their lyrics. The rise of occultism in the Seventies may be a worthy subject for a sociologist, but if Tame can't produce better evidence than he has, trying to suggest that rock directed, rather than reflected, trends in belief in some "evil" or "Satanic" direction is an infernal cheek.

Gary Cooper
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PI IN THE SKY

What in the name of Pythagoras is a "trillion trillion" [FT81:19]? Multiply a trillion – a million cubed or 10^{18} – by itself and you get 10^{36} or a sextillion. Unless, of course, the trillions in question follow the peculiar US practice of designating a thousand million (10^9) as a billion, 10^{12} as a trillion and so forth. A "trillion trillion" in these terms would equal 10^{24} , alias a septillion. This is confusing stuff: if you're naming a number equalling a million to the power of four or a thousand to the eighth, why use a prefix meaning "seven"? Logical it ain't.

As for the actual claim to have discovered "pi in the sky", I thought this evinced limited numeracy. Pi, rounded at the tenth place, is 3.1415926536; "a value for pi within five parts per thousand" could be anything from 3.1365 (etc) to 3.1465 (etc).

As an approximation to pi this is a good deal less precise than the rough approximation $22/7$ (3.1428577) and far short of the fraction $355/113$, an approximation to pi which has been known for millennia and is correct to within three parts per 10 million (3.1415929). All that has been proved is that, if your criteria are flexible enough, you can find any number anywhere. (If it had been the number 23, on the other hand...)

Still, at least parts of that article had the "Horatio" quality ("more things in heaven and earth...") which is the essence of Forteana. To me at least, around 10 of the 25 articles in the Strange Days section of FT81 (and 14 of the 20 Sidelines) were not so much Horatios as "Believe It Or Nots" (BIONs): strange deaths, conventional (but bizarre) biology, meaningless (but amusing) coincidences. BIONs fill pages, but I'd hate to see the balance of the mag tipped any further away from the Horatio element: it's not Ripleyan Times! In fairness, the main features, Forum and the reviews made up for a lot, not to mention the White Cat of Uffington...

Finally, could I query Jenny Randles' diplomatic statement – re the "alien autopsy" footage – that "no one doubts Ray Santilli's sincerity"? Call me a sceptic – what the hell, call me a skeptic – but it's a principle of mine to doubt the sincerity of anyone involved in hyping Roswell, especially when they start doing so over 40 years after the initial story.

It's either that or doubt their rationality, and the former seems the more charitable option.

Phil Edwards
Manchester

PERFORMING SNAIL

In the photograph of a snail going round in a circle [FT82:17], there appears to me to be a thin wire or perhaps a thread running as a radius from the centre of the circular snail trail to just behind its head. If this were the case it would of course explain the circular trail as merely the path of a tethered snail. What it does not explain is why on earth someone would bother to tie up a snail and send a photo of its path to a newspaper... There's nowt so queer as folk!

Mick Lyons
Cumbria



THANKSGIVING SIGN

This celestial feather appeared over our home in Benedict Canyon, Beverly Hills, California, in November 1994, right around Thanksgiving. Could it be a sign from our long dead Indian friends commemorating the first such celebration? Or from the Spirit of Turkeys Past? I leave it to you...

Philip Proctor
Firesign Theatre, Beverly Hills.

ARMED AND EXTREMELY PARANOID

During the '94 UnConvention, a number of us went on an evening constitutional to view Fort's old house in Marchmont Street. During this ramble, Michel Meurger happened to mention that matters Fortean are not as popular as they might be in France because certain well-known writers on strange phenomena there are very prominent in circles close to Jean Marie Le Pen, the extreme right wing politician, and hence an interest in such esoterica is viewed as being somewhat right wing.

In the United States, the link between matters of Fortean interest and the far right is far more overt and became much more widely known when the spotlight was turned on the American Militia movement in the wake of the Oklahoma bombing. It would seem that the heavily armed militias which have proliferated across the States in recent years have grafted huge quantities of "Fortean" (I use the term very loosely here) ideas on to their belief system.

The fundamental tenet of such groups is that there is a deep conspiracy behind the elected government, run by the Illuminati, Jewish Bankers and the Bilderberg Group (as well as the British Royals, who head the world's drug trade), which is using gun control law to prepare for imposition of a fascist dictatorship on the nation. They believe they must resist this by arming heavily and fighting the government – a situation reminiscent of that behind the rise of the Nazis, who were initially a paramilitary body deeply convinced their government was a front for Jewish bankers. It's a case of "to save democracy we must destroy it", and ironically a reversal of one of the rea-

sons many countries have gun control laws: to stop armed groups overthrowing an elected government and imposing a dictatorship.

The paranoid subtext which they weave to justify their actions contains many central tenets long familiar to Fortean. They believe firmly in extraterrestrial contact and that the government retrieved a crashed UFO at Roswell, and that the government has used the technology to build secret craft which are tested in the infamous 'Area 51'. They believe the government is carrying out sinister experiments involving cattle mutilations and that prominent militia members, such as lawyer Linda Thompson, are regularly buzzed by black, unmarked helicopters, also used in the mutilation experiments; that they are subjected to mind control rays, pursued by Men in Black and that many everyday symbols have a hidden, occult significance; that AIDS was produced in a laboratory and that the pyramids contain hidden chambers in which items of sinister meaning dwell.

True, much of the Militia's interest in this stuff derives from opportunistic seizing of anything that can be used to "prove" the hidden nature of their government and bolster their claims to be the legitimate saviours of America.

But as the beliefs of the militias become better known and as other people take up their ideas – David Icke, for example, now talks in terms not unlike these – we must be careful that the cheerful freewheeling spirit of Forteana as we know it is not stifled by right wing paranoia and twisted political opportunism.

Ian Simmons
Leicester

PEARSON'S
NEWTONIANISM

Ronald Pearson gave no proof whatsoever of his fantastic claims ["Updating Newton" *FT* 81:57]. He says that theorists have been unable to match up relativity to quantum theory. "Even Stephen Hawking who admits this on page 12 of *A Brief History of Time*," writes Pearson, "spends most of the book discussing how theorists are still trying to achieve what he has already said is impossible." This is false. Nowhere in his book does Hawking say that unifying relativity and quantum theory is "impossible".

Later on, Pearson writes: "Originally, the idea of the Ether was discredited because of its incompatibility with relativity theory." This is complete nonsense. The existence of the ether was first questioned after a series of experiments (the first of which was the famous Michelson-Morley experiment of 1887), which failed to detect it in any way. It was this which led Einstein to come up with the theory of relativity and to abandon the concept of the ether.

Finally, Pearson seems to imply that his "theory" is widely accepted among Russian physicists.

This is completely false, as any Russian physicist would confirm. Furthermore, the Science Citation Index failed to come up with any paper by a "Professor Philip Kanarev" or even by anyone at a "Kybar State University".

Marco de Innocentis
University of York

Mr Pearson's letter in *FT* 81 raises several issues. First, there is the problem of Mr Michael Roll, a kind of involuntary comedy act who, it seems, is blessed with a unique species of memory. For examples: he persistently claims that Prof Archie Roy has endorsed the 'evidence' of survival of death produced at seances with which Mr Roll was associated, when Prof Roy has done nothing of the sort; he has printed an absolutely inaccurate account of comments made by Dr Sue Blackmore at the *FT* UnConvention 95; and he caused Mr Pearson to inflict on the unsuspecting readers of *Psychic World* an almost entirely fictitious, not to say wild, story of my encounters with him at the UnConvention and on the radio.

Poor Mr Pearson, to have such an ally and proselytiser of his cause. For Mr Roll presented him on the radio to be proclaiming Einstein entirely wrong. Mr Pearson's letter makes plain he does not – or not quite. But it was really Mr Roll that I protested against on Talk Radio – against his obsessive and tiresome repetitions that there is a conspiracy to suppress Mr Pearson's work.

Mr Pearson's own account of his work, insofar as I understand it, shows him to be indubitably wrong about a number of things, only some of which I can address here. Herbert Dingle clearly did not under-



GREEN MEN

I am studying the Green Man as a mythic and architectural figure. Foliate heads and heads spewing vegetation have appeared on misericords and bosses, as well as in chapter houses since the Middle Ages, and are found in the smallest parish church as well as in our great cathedrals. As part of my research I'm building up a database of locations and would be really grateful for any references from readers. I need to know the church, parish and county and the position of the carving or picture. There are no complete records and unearthing information is very difficult, so every little piece of information on a postcard to me will help.

Mike Harding
Bower Bank, Dent, Cumbria LA10 5QQ.

stand the relativity in relativity theory – a clock only appears to run 'fast' or 'slow' according to its location and velocity in relation to an observer. This kind of paradox in Einstein's theories is merely superficial.

The trouble with objecting to relativity theory is that every experimental test it has undergone has proved it, and its predictive powers, correct. The endorsement of Mr Pearson's ideas by some unknown Russian scientists at an obscure conference does not make him right. For all we know, these people may be a gang of flat-earthers.

There are others flaws in Mr Pearson's logic. Neither quantum theory nor relativity call for the 'ether', so physicists – good Occamists – dropped the concept. It is not "reasonable to conclude" that because Mr Pearson has resurrected it in some form that the rest of physics is wrong (which his own letter shows he recognises, in fact). What he means by a "brain-like structure", and how he would show that or how the mind is part of the ether and perhaps immortal, mathematically, I don't know. Until I do, it seems to me that Mr Pearson puts himself in the position of the only man in the regiment who's in step.

He rather naively implies that physicists have been ploughing a single furrow all these years since 1905. The history of theoretical physics since then is littered with abandoned theories – dumped because they did not work. Scientists, as this history shows, are not dishonest as a class and I repeat my guess that Mr Pearson's ideas are

failing the peer-review system not because their faces don't fit, or because there is a conspiracy, or because there is no open-mindedness in the West, but because they don't work. The promise of superstring theory is that by providing the 'perspective' of additional spatial dimensions it actually simplifies the mathematical perception of the physical world (even disposing of the cosmological constant that so irritates Mr Pearson). It does provide a "theory of everything" and its physical basis and predictive properties should be capable of being established.

Superstring theory most certainly does make quantum theory compatible with gravity. Or, to put it another way, it is "a comprehensive theory of both matter-energy and space-time" (Michio Kaku, *Hyperspace*, HarperCollins San Francisco 1994, p.154). In *The World Within The World* (OUP 1995 edition, p.196), John D. Barrow explains how strings work quite clearly: "...a single string possesses many possible energies of vibration... The lowest-energy vibration should be associated with gravity, the weakest force, whilst the more energetic excitations of the string may give rise to other forces and particles."

Kaku makes the point that while physicists were approaching string maths as an expression of quantum forces (not relativity, *pace* Mr Pearson) they were "shocked" to see Einstein's relativity equations emerging from the string "as if by magic", and says (p.155) "...from some purely geometrical arguments from a string, one is able to derive the entire progress of physics for the past two millennia." Confer: F. David Peat, *Superstrings*, Abacus 1988, p.126: "...it appears that final dream [of unifying all the forces of nature] is within the grasp of physics," and P. Coveney and R. Highfield, *The Arrow of Time*, Flamingo 1991, p.143 (*pace* Mr Pearson, again): "...optimistic physicists, including Stephen Hawking, believe that with the advent of string theory, the end of theoretical physics is in sight."

If Mr Pearson wants to take on opposition of that weight, good luck to him. But he might do better were he not encumbered by the assistance of Mr Roll.

Peter Brookesmith
London

I'll add Pearson to my collection of "paradoxers" in de Morgan's use of the word. What on earth has mathematics to do with either personality or death? This is going to be like Tippler's "proof" of physical reincarnation – or worse. One of these days I'd like to arrange a conference where all the loners who have conclusively disproved Einstein can get together and compare their funny equations.

Dr Roger Musson
Edinburgh

STUCK SETTLERS,
ARMY ANTS AND
SNUFF MOVIES

If it were true that no one can escape from the bewitched hamlet of Wang Ying [*FT* 82:43], we should expect the Chinese authorities, a practical and ruthless bunch, to exploit this black hole by exiling prisoners and dissidents there. Indeed, it is rumoured by a disreputable source that government officials, worried about possible disruptions of the UN's World Conference on Women in Beijing, seriously considered luring NGO activists to Wang Ying by promising a conference there on Tibetan Lesbians and the Democratic Clitoris.

The suffering citizens of Norilsk, Siberia, also cannot escape their city, which may be the most polluted in the world. A recent article in the *Financial Times* of London states that it is almost impossible for (residents) to leave. There are no roads or railways connecting the city to the rest of Russia. The only way out is by air, a form of transport few Russians can afford. Any money that Norilsk residents possess is tied up in their apartments, which today are virtually worthless. Some of the original gulag prisoners who built Norilsk 60 years ago are still trapped there.

The snail that was intent in going round in circles [*FT* 82:17] eventually broke out of its rut. But some species of army ants can be more persistent. During their raids, eddies of ants on the edge of the advancing stream can get cut off from their sisters; thus isolated, they commence "circular milling". A mass of hundreds or even thousands of ants will circle for days until they die. An illustration of a tightly-packed circle of dead army ants (looking remarkably similar to a crop circle), from *The Ants* by Bert Hölldobler and Edward Wilson, is reproduced above.

If Ray Santilli's film had simulated a vivisection rather than an autopsy of an alien, then likening it to a snuff movie would make sense [*FT* 82:34]. As it is, the parallels that John Lundberg sees between the alien autopsy film and snuff movies are unconvincing. Aside from the fact that both feign realism, the two types of film are (only figuratively) worlds apart in their styles and moods.

Using an old analogy, one could say that the snuff movie is Dionysian – savage, sadistic, orgiastic – while the autopsy film is Apollonian – antiseptic, clinical, restrained and controlled.

For those readers who thought that Ian Simmons' article on Koro, the shrinking penis panic [*FT* 82:30] was, like its subject, too short, I suggest they consult the following: *Extraordinary Disorders of Human Behaviour*, Claude Friedmann and Robert Fauguet, eds. (N.Y. & London: Plenum, 1982),



A circular mill of the army ant *Labidus praedator*. This group was cut off from the rest of their colony by rain. The workers were so strongly attracted to each other that none developed enough centrifugal direction to lead the others out of the mill. After a day and a half, all were dead. (From Schneirla, 1971.) Bert Hölldobler and Edward Wilson, *The Ants* (Harvard, 1990), pp 585-6.

pp155-172; and *The Culture-Bound Syndromes – Folk Illnesses of Psychiatric and Anthropological Interest*, Ronald Simons and Charles Hughes, eds. (Dordrecht & Boston: D. Reidel, 1985), pp152-194.

Brian Chapman.
Victoria, British Columbia.

PLAGUED BY
COINCIDENCES

I've got coincidences and I don't know what to make of them. I had my first historical detective story published in 1989 and there are now seven in the series. They are set in 1928 and I do a lot of background research for them.

The first one, *Cocaine Blues*, featured a chemist's shop painted pink in a notorious part of Melbourne called Little Lonsdale Street. I had finished the manuscript and it was typeset when I read that excavations in the remains of Little Lon showed that the building I had invented was actually a chemist shop and even painted pink. However, I might have read that somewhere.

The second story was unmarked by synchronicity but in the third, *Murder on The Ballarat Train*, I invented a murderer called Alastair Thompson, a medical student. After the book was published, a medical student in Adelaide called Alastair Thompson turned into a murderer. I have received letters suggesting that I change the character's name to spare his family's feelings, because my physical description of him is apparently very accurate as well as the name.

Then I found mention of an obscure dance hall called Green Mill (the last of which burned down in 1944) and featured it in *The Green Mill Murder*, which was pub-

lished contemporaneously with the establishment of a dance company called The Green Mill Dance Company. I had never heard of them or they of me and the book was in proof when they came to my notice. This story is about jazz and I wanted to hear a song called 'St James' Infirmary' for a quote. I turned on the radio and it was playing. It was half-way through and what I heard were just the words I wanted.

In the latest mystery, *Ruddy Gore*, I decided on the opera I was using before I started to research. I found that the only time Riddigore was put on in Melbourne before the theatre burned down in 1929 was bang on my serial chronology in 1928 and was a gala performance to welcome Bert Hinkler, perfect because my main character is also a flyer. Then, after no performances in Australia for 40 years, the Australian Opera's Gilbert and Sullivan for 1995 is Riddigore.

Research has always been marked by coincidence, what Koestler or someone calls "The Library Angel". When I'm stuck for a bit of information – like, for instance, the interior of that same Green Mill – I put it aside and it comes up, always in the most unlikely context.

I found out about the decor of the dance hall because a grandmother of one of my clients (I am a Legal Aid Duty Lawyer on a locum basis) was in court as a character witness for him and spontaneously told me that she had gone to her first dance at the Green Mill and remembered it perfectly.

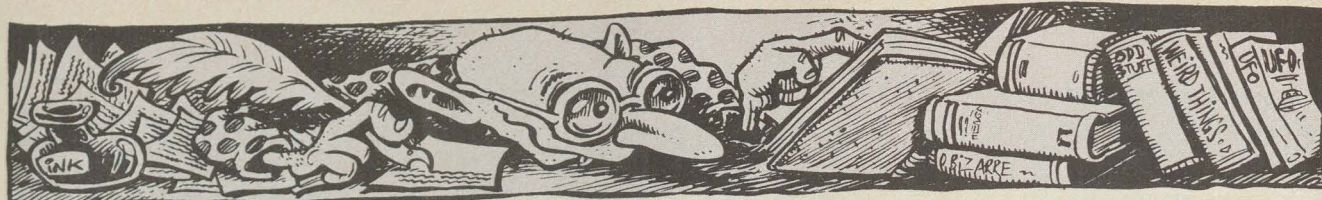
Since my writing method is to research for some months, do nothing for a couple of weeks while it all percolates, and then write madly for a fortnight at about 15,000 words a day until I finish the book and collapse, I am wondering what I am tapping into. I can't really have turned the other Alastair Thompson into a murderer, can I? That's the crime novelist's nightmare.

Kerry Greenwood
Victoria, Australia

WATERTIGHT THEORY

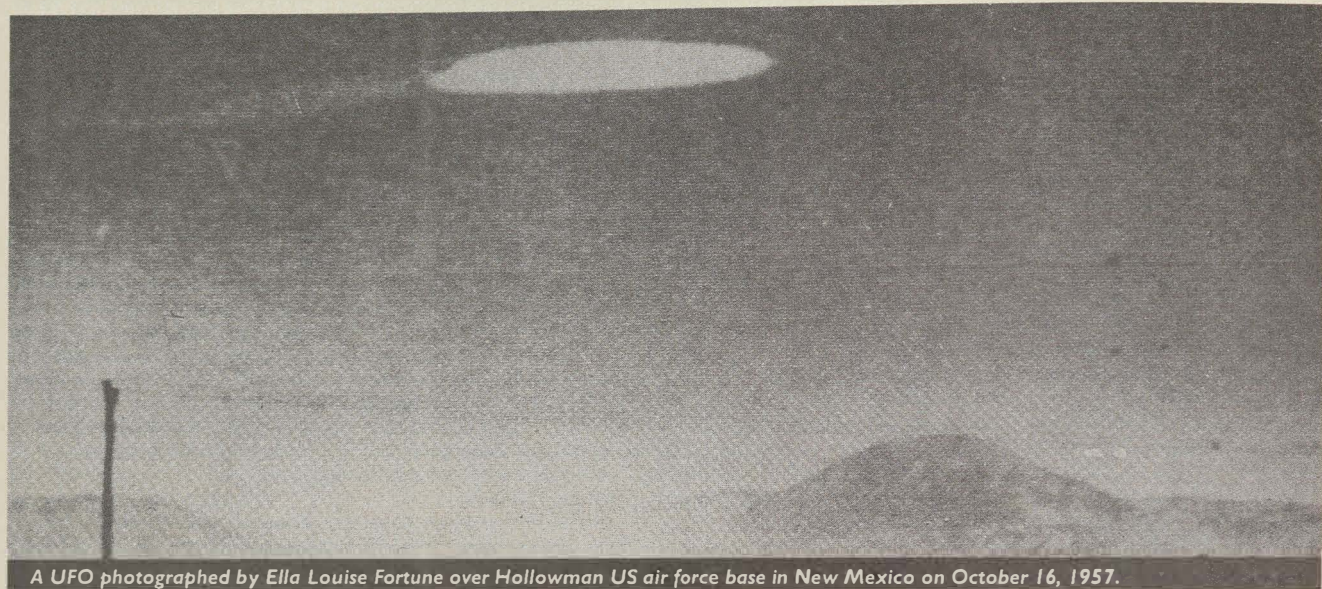
If there are amphibious aliens with the technology for interstellar travel, they would have some kind of sensors to detect water. Perhaps they regard our planet as a cosmic 'oasis' or 'service-station', water being as rare, or rarer, in space as in the Sahara desert. This might explain why out of all the cosmos, they make such efforts – and in such numbers – to get here. They're just replenishing water supplies on their way to somewhere else. No one goes to, say, Scratchwood Services as a destination of itself, do they? (They do? That is weird!)

Bobby Zodiac
Birmingham



Global Ufology: Dissected

UFO: THE COMPLETE SIGHTINGS CATALOGUE by Peter Brookesmith



A UFO photographed by Ella Louise Fortune over Hollowman US air force base in New Mexico on October 16, 1957.

A book from Peter Brookesmith is an event. As editor of the enormously successful 1980 encyclopaedic part-work *The Unexplained* (published in the USA as *Mysteries of Mind, Space and Time*) he had a golden opportunity to discuss many Fortean and other mysteries with the leading researchers and thinkers of our time. In his own right, he is one of the field's most assiduous commentators and critics. So what he has to say about the mysteries of ufology, as well as his assessment of the subject's many personalities and cases, deserves an attentive reading.

Given his acerbic comments on ufologists and their thinking in these and other pages, the reader might conclude that Brookesmith is among the ranks of the skeptics. (The spelling with a 'k' distinguishes the militant and hostile narrow-minded attack on credulity and superstition from classical and Fortean scepticism which is more akin to doubt than certainty.) Nothing could be further from the truth as Brookesmith even admits to seeing a few UFOs himself – like any sensible person he just wants a level of proof and argument that is logical and convincing.

Despite its title, this book is more than a mere catalogue of sightings. The greater part of it comprises nearly 300 selected cases purporting to be sightings of – or encounters with – something otherworldly and spanning the range of recorded history, geography, sociology and culture, accompanied throughout by photographs.

Brookesmith's exposition is careful to demonstrate the astonishing diversity of

reported experience and perceived details in the form of a precis of each case, topped and tailed with background details and an 'assessment'. Apart from their innate value as examples, most of Brookesmith's cases have at least two witnesses. His selection includes some known hoaxes, legends and mistakes because these, too, shed light on what happens to UFO reports in our society.

The overall effect is to lay down an impressive stratum of reliable and concise data upon which to unleash his reasoning armed only with Occam's Razor. While the main chapters of case summaries – headed 'Dragons and Demons', 'From Outer Space', 'Contact?', 'Abductions and Absurdities', 'A New Ufology', 'Natural or Unnatural' and 'International Enigma' – cover the key periods and paradigms of the UFO story, each with an introductory essay, the real highlights of the book for this reviewer are the critical apparatus provided by the appendices. Some are simple research aids, such as a glossary, a list of definitions, a who's who, mapping US sightings and a chronology of major 'flaps'.

The remaining appendices tackle distinct issues: are UFOs good or evil? what is their relationship to crop circles? why are they implicated in animal mutilation? what is going on in tales of abduction and horrific experimentation by aliens? what contribution can science make to the debate? and a useful review of the viable hypotheses (from occultism to 'earth lights' theory). Where other authors have pot-boiled whole books out of these topics,

Brookesmith has reduced them to their essences so clearly that even experienced ufologists could benefit from his re-evaluation. His conclusion – that whatever the anomalous origin of sightings, the UFO phenomenon itself owes more to the psychology of witnesses and the sociology of propagating reports and public interest – is complex and will need further work to justify, but the foundation is soundly laid here.

There are two conspicuous flaws. The first is its large format which, given the amount of use the book will get, makes it rather unwieldy. Secondly, there is a general lack of source referencing for cases. Books and other sources are, indeed, mentioned sporadically throughout, but frequently without publication details. Also, the use of the word 'complete' in the title is annoying – a better word would have been 'comprehensive' – as Brookesmith himself would acknowledge that anything of a definitive nature in ufology would be a miracle. OK, that's three niggles but, in truth, they are minor and fade into insignificance on consideration of the general excellence.

Taken as a whole, I'd say it is the best overview of ufology in recent years. Its balanced, thoughtful and, yes, scientific, approach means schools and libraries can stock it in their reference section with no qualms. Highly recommended for newcomer and old hack alike.

Bob Rickard

Blandford Press, London; 1995. hb £14.99, pp176, index, appendices, illus. ISBN: 0-7137-2518-4. (pb £10.99, ISBN: 0-7137-2583-4.)

FINGERPRINTS OF THE GODS A Quest for the Beginning and the End by Graham Hancock

Once in every generation, a writer on Fortean topics grabs the public imagination. Twenty years ago Von Däniken did it, and to judge from the public reception accorded Graham Hancock's second intellectual whodunit (60,000 hardcovers sold in less than three months), the former East African correspondent for the *Economist* looks to have taken on the Swiss hotelier's mantle.

Hancock's thesis is suitably earth-shattering. He suggests that a major, technologically-advanced civilisation once existed on the land mass which is now Antarctica, at that time located much farther north. This civilisation perished in a massive natural disaster around 11,000 BC and left, as its legacy, signs and signifiers pointing to its intellectual prowess written in a 'language' that could be decoded only by a similarly-advanced society. These signs warn of the inevitability of cyclical cataclysms.

Hancock makes his case by collecting evidence of natural disasters from around the globe. The apparent universality of flood legends in early traditions is probably his strongest exhibit; numerous examples are given and Hancock's research is not exhaustive. Elsewhere Hancock points to the ancient long-term calendar based around the changing position of the sun at dawn on the vernal equinox, which produces older dates for major monuments than those assigned by 'conventional' archaeology; debates the controversial phenomenon of 'earth crust displacement' (the rapid – in geological terms – shifting of continental land masses, with disastrous consequences for any civilisations around at the time); and considers the possibility that the earth's polarisation is reversed every 13,000 years, with similarly spectacular results.

In the course of his travels, Hancock visits many of the sites he believes were built by his ancient supermen. At Tiwanaku, a ruined city a couple of hours' journey north-west of La Paz, he reinterprets pictograms and hieroglyphs left by a mysterious Andean civilisation on the Gateway of the Sun and argues plausibly that these people lived thousands of years earlier than the 500 AD suggested by orthodox archaeologists. In Egypt, he speculates that the Great Pyramid and its sisters are the 'Kilroy Was Here' (his words) of his Antarctic civilisation.

Whatever you think of such arguments, Hancock is a Fortean in the finest sense. He presents his argument without trying to ram it home. It is possible to walk away with an open mind. The reader can pick and choose what is plausible, and what is fantasy.

Heinemann, 1995, hb £16.99, pp578, photos, illus, refs, bib, index. ISBN: 0-434-31336-X.

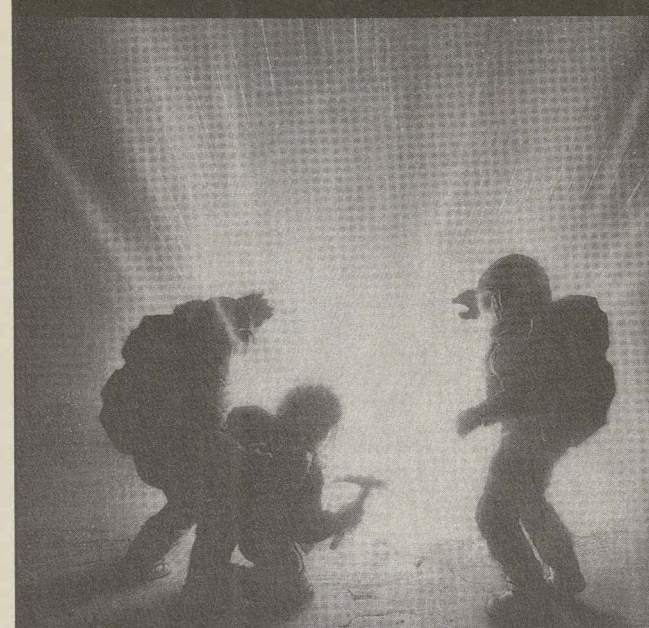
Richard Furlong

COMPETITION CORNER

COMPETITION #13 Who invented the famous 'Close Encounter' rating system and how many 'kinds' or levels of UFO witness experiences did it include? The first three correct entries to be rescued from an alien genetics lab will each win a copy of *UFOs: The Complete Sightings Catalogue* by Peter Brookesmith, courtesy of publisher Blandford. Only one entry per person, please, to reach us by postcard, email or fax by 1 Feb 1996.

Congratulations to Michael O'Regan of West Molesey, Jenny Hillier of Hartlepool and Eero Sarkkinen of Finland – winners of Competition #11 who named 'Reticulus' (Zeta Reticuli 1 or 2) as the star system from which the alien abductors of Betty and Barney Hill 'claimed to have come' from. (In fact, this was the conclusion of Marjorie Fish in 1972 after studying the star map drawn from memory by Betty Hill.) There were 72 qualifying entries – including six from Jersey! Our winners each receive a copy of *Alien Discussions* edited by Pritchard, Pritchard, Mack, Kasey and Yapp, courtesy of North Cambridge Press.

GAME REVIEW



THE DIG

The idea of first contact with an alien civilisation has always been one of the visceral buzzes of the science-fiction genre. At the heart of the attraction is speculation about the 'otherness' of the aliens. Interpretations of the theme have been varied: from the gods and demons of religion and cosmogony to the threatening Grays of ufology and the monolithic gateway of 2001. It is a lure that Forteaners feel deep down and something that hundreds of writers, film-makers – and now game-makers – have had a stab at. In the event, one feels, reality may prove stranger than our wildest fiction; but until then our imaginations can savour the 'what-if' adventures like this long-awaited game from LucasArts.

The genesis of *The Dig* has passed into legend: initial idea by Steven Spielberg, five years in the making, special effects by Industrial Light and Magic. The plot is simple. A large asteroid enters our solar system and a team is sent to plant nuclear charges on it. They come unexpectedly upon a geometric puzzle, the first of many and an obvious sign of intelligence. Solving it initiates a stunning sequence in which the asteroid transforms into a ship and transports our heroes to an alien planet. Here the game proper starts: they have to explore, learn about who brought them there and why and, of course, how to get back. The thrill of the unexpected is well maintained over tens of hours of game play.

The game engine and presentation will be familiar to anyone who tackled LucasArts' previous successes: the *Indiana Jones* and *Monkey Island* adventures ie. point-and-click your way through multiple choice questions and puzzles. The early decision to release the game only on CD (for Mac and PC) was necessitated by hundreds of screens' worth of rendered graphics, animation and speech. Visually, the game has a suitably eerie visual atmosphere, with sombre, primary colours and artwork that recalls the best of SF and fantasy illustration. To run the game at optimum speed you will need a minimum of a 486-66mhz PC (or Mac equivalent), a dual speed CD drive and a standard 16-bit sound card.

The Dig. LucasArts Entertainment, USA; 1995. Released in the UK by Virgin Interactive; on Mac and PC CD-ROM formats; rrp £44.99.

Bob Rickard

WIN THE DIG

COMPETITION #14 We have five PC versions of *The Dig* to give away to the first five readers who can name the title of the short story on which the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* was based. Only one entry per person, please, to reach us by postcard, email or fax by 1 Feb 1996.

TAKING A CHANCE

It is, perhaps, appropriate that after many months without seeing a single book on synchronicity or coincidences, these two should turn up together in my review tray, especially since they were published abroad some time ago, in different years, by different publishers, in different countries. It is also, then, appropriate that they complement each other perfectly.

The Anderson book's approach, as reflected in its title, is more populist and relies largely on recounted anecdotes which were related to him during his research, or had been gleaned from the history of the subject. He is heavy on real stories, but light on the theorising, although he does step into this area periodically. Combs and Holland take the opposite tack: they restrict their anecdotal tales to those which support their investigation into synchronicity and delve deeply into the theoretical side of the subject, taking on board the work of Jung, Kammerer, Bohm and Sheldrake, among others, to look into all aspects of the meaningful coincidence business. Thought-provoking, thorough and illuminating, it is a joy to read, taking a good look not only at the modern scientific and psychological approaches to synchronicity, but also its relation to trickster myths throughout world culture. Its content overlaps significantly with the Anderson book, but by looking at things from a different perspective this becomes a pleasing synergy rather than a tiresome repetition, for those reading the two back to back as I did.

Synchronicity, serendipity and the trickster spirit are close to the core of matters Fortean and these two books explore the subject with a lucidity and clear minded joy which is pleasing to behold. If you really want to know how the universe works, you could do worse than start here.

Ian Simmons

COINCIDENCES, Chance or Fate?

by Ken Anderson.

Blandford, London, 1995, pb £9.99, pp297, bib. ISBN: 0-7137-2523-0.

SYNCHRONICITY, Science Myth and the Trickster

by Allan Combs & Mark Holland.

Floris Books, Edinburgh, 1994 pb £9.99, pp176, index, ref, appendices. ISBN: 0-86315-207-4.

PRODUCT REVIEW

THE FENG SHUI KIT
Man-Ho Kwok

Feng Shui, the Chinese art of geomancy, has been gaining a following in the Green/New Age market, so it was only a matter of time before a DIY kit appeared. Prepared as it is under the auspices of the impressive-sounding "International Consultancy On Religion, Education and Culture" (ICOREC), one expects a quality product. Alas, on opening the box, the first thing that meets the eye is the *Pa Kua* mirror (used to deflect evil influences) printed on cheap cardboard with the *I Ching* trigrams in the wrong order (see diagram for the correct version). I wish I could say this was the first time that ICOREC have been responsible for this sort of gaffe, but I'm afraid I can't.

We also have a "specially designed feng shui compass", which is vastly simplified compared to the Chinese originals, made of plastic and cardboard, and looks as if it's come straight from the toy-manufacturer; and there's the big, glossy paperback which reduces the whole system to the level of newspaper astrology. Obviously aimed at the Christmas gift market, this is likely to be forgotten by New Year. Ghostly tat.

Piatkus, London; 1995; Boxed set £17.99. Book: pb, pp112, index, bib, illus. Compass. *Pa Kua* mirror. ISBN 0-7499-1462-9.

Steve Moore

POUSSIN'S SECRET

by David Wood and Ian Campbell

This lavishly produced and dauntingly priced booklet (nearly a fiver for just over 30 pages!) is the latest product of that hall of mirrors which is the mystery of Rennes-la-Chateau.

It is an addendum to *GENESIS: The First Book of Revelation* and *GENESET: Target Earth*, which explored the possibility that the whole schemozzle was a warning of impending disaster left to man by an advanced intelligence: so advanced, in fact that it could not leave a message understandable by its target audience (perhaps it should have written it in wheat fields).

This booklet focuses on the role of Poussin's notorious painting *Les Bergers d'Arcadie* in the mix, dissecting the mathematics of its proportions to reveal an earth-shattering inner truth. So, if you fork out your fiver do you get your shattering inner truth? Well, what do you think?

What you get in the last but one paragraph is an admission and an invitation: "We will ashamedly admit to feeling... reticence to disclose [sic] the secret in detail for fear of offending the casual reader, although we are willing to divulge our speculations to selected seekers."

In other words, the whole business of Rennes-le-Chateau is about to get another secret society dangling from it. Just what it needs. Spend the money on beer.

Genesis Trading Co Ltd, (Wellwood, North Farm Road, High Brooms, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 3DR), 1995, pb £4.95, pp32, figs, illus, appendix. ISBN: 1-873335-24-5.

Ian Simmons

WHO WROTE THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS?

by Norman Golb

It's always sad to see blinkered academics who make theory into fact, shut their ears to criticism, and ignore or reinterpret inconveniently opposing evidence.

There never was any firm evidence for the Dead Sea Scrolls being relics of an Essene monastery at Qumran. In the early 1950s, it was a possibility – an hypothesis, perhaps to be tentatively accepted, but to be tested like any other theory. By the 1960s too many senior academic reputations were at stake for the theory to be questioned. The team of editors took the monastery as an established fact.

Bearing in mind the danger of turning theory into fact, one is loath to say that Golb proves otherwise; but he puts forward a strong case for Qumran actually being a military stronghold and nothing else.

He argues that the scrolls hidden in various caves in the area were nothing to do with the Essenes – or no more than any other Jewish sect. They were more likely, he says, to have been a collection of both orthodox and heterodox teachings of many different groups, and probably either the Temple library or the private library of one or more Jewish scholars in Jerusalem. When the city was about to fall to the Romans in AD 70, the treasured library was hidden out in the desert.

Norman Golb is no sensationalist; a professor of Jewish history, he has studied the scroll problem, when allowed to, since the 1950s. He began to voice his doubts about the Qumran-Essene identification as early as 1960, but was ignored.

In this detailed account he argues that the senior editors sat on the scrolls for years, ignoring the clamour for their publication and allowing no one outside their own teams to examine the still-unpublished ones, effectively suppressing evidence which has only recently begun to be released.

Golb doesn't try to conceal his anger at the scroll editors for their obduracy over nearly five decades. But amid the professional bitterness he argues a convincing case. Michael O'Mara Books, London, 1995, hb £19.99, index, bib, notes, glossary, photos, illus. ISBN: 1-85479-788-3.

David V Barrett



DRAGONS: A Natural History

by Karl Shuker

This beautifully illustrated book is nothing less than a joyful celebration of the sheer variety of cultural interpretations of the dragon. Every conceivable type of dragon is covered – from zoology, folklore, myth and legend, history, heraldry and alchemy – including many that might be new to you. The full colour pictures throughout complement Shuker's nicely-crafted text which manages to convey a huge amount of obscure detail without being patronising or tedious. What a pleasure to see a well-written book for the general reader by an authority who clearly delights in his subject. Well done author and publisher!

Aurum Press, London; 1995. pb £12.95, pp120, index, bib. ISBN: 1-85410-372-5.

BREWER'S DICTIONARY OF PHRASE & FABLE

15th edition, revised by Adrian Room.

This new edition of the browser's bible of miscellaneous significance includes a layer of new entries such as Glasnost, Svengali, Chapquiddick, Corn Circles and so forth. It also usefully expands some of the original entries: I was pleased to find, for instance, an improved listing of famous giants. Still, some of the quirky backwaters of the Rev. Brewer's original are inevitably lost and I shall retain my facsimile of the 1894 "Enlarged Edition" which frequently informs me about something I wasn't looking up.

Cassell, London; 1995. hb £20, pp1200. ISBN: 0-304-34599-7.

MERLIN THROUGH THE AGES: A Chronological Anthology and Sourcebook

edited by R.J. Stewart & John Matthews

Covering a broad range, from the earliest Celtic poems attributed to Merlin, mainly through Arthurian romance, we have here a collection of histories, alchemical texts, poetry, prose-fiction and articles about the primary British sage. Perhaps its only real problem is that with much of the material being extracts and abridgements, the reader's left hungering for the whole thing. But does Merlin really deserve to have the 'shaman' label hung round his neck? The very range of material presented here suggests that the figure is much larger than that sort of trivialising. Commendable, nonetheless.

Blandford, London, 1995, hb £16.99, pp351, bib, illus. ISBN: 0-7137-2468-4.

ECCENTRICS

by David Weeks and Jamie James.

According to the jacket blurb, "David Weeks is the first scientist to conduct a systematic study of eccentrics". The historical survey of such people, spanning 1550 to 1950, is certainly fun, including not only old favourites like Emperor Norton, William Beckford and Howard Hughes, but also Einstein, Davy Crockett and Victoria Woodhull. However, the problem of self-selection arises with the 1,000 contemporary English and American eccentrics; would a genuine eccentric admit to being so for the benefit of a psychologist? Eccentricity is far easier to describe than to define; after all, it has to be set against 'normality', whatever that is. Most of the modern-day examples are rather dull, compensating for their lack of worldly success by playing up their chosen quirks. The book peters out with a medley of vacuous generalisations.

Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London; 1995. hb £17.99, pp208, photos, bib, index. ISBN: 0-297-81447-8.

ALEXANDRIA #3

edited by David Fideler

A third, very large volume of this collection of essays on Western cosmological traditions, heavily Platonist in tone, with material ranging over the ancient, mediæval and modern periods. Learned and scholarly without being dully scholastic, there's plenty of interest here for all who are involved in religion, philosophy and esotericism. David Fideler is also to be congratulated on the rest of his (similarly-aligned) publishing programme over recent years.

Phanes Press, P.O.Box 6114, Grand Rapids, MI 49516, USA; 1995. pb \$25.00 (mc p+p), pp486, notes, reviews, illus. ISBN 0-933999-54-2.



A modern beach beauty with cool shades, or a rare photo of a female 'Grey'? It is, in fact, an Egyptian ivory statuette from the 5th millennium BC. From *The British Museum Dictionary of Ancient Egypt*.

BRITISH MUSEUM DICTIONARY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

by Ian Shaw & Paul Nicholson

Massive, both in size and scope, covering history, geography, religion, daily life, etc.; packed with illustrations, plans and maps; and with each entry having a further reading list, this is probably the place to start if there's anything you want to know about Egypt. It's an orthodox work – no trace here of recent controversies about the date of the Sphinx or the problems of dynastic chronology – but faced with such enormous scholarship and such a reasonable price, is anyone going to worry about that? A must-have reference work for anyone interested in the ancient world.

British Museum Press, London; 1995. hb £27.50, pp328, index, refs, chronology, appendices, photos, plans. ISBN 0-7141-0982-7.

STRANGE BUT TRUE? CASEBOOK

by Jenny Randles

A gratingly ungrammatical title, after which it's business as usual in this follow-up volume to *Strange but True?* (reviewed FT80.61). Here we have the stories from the second series of the popular TV programme, some familiar, some less so, with perhaps a greater leaning toward healing and psi-phenomena this time around. Commercial, but well-produced and solidly done.

Piatkus, London; 1995. pb £10.99, pp191, bib, illus. ISBN 0-7499-1558-7.

REVIEWS

THE CHRIST SPARKS by William Bloom

I have always had a soft spot for the Findhorn bunch, especially their whisky vat houses, giant veg and stunning meeting hall; I even quite like their collaboration with earth spirits. When it comes to their more recent directions though, with quasi-guru characters and New Age channelling, I have to admit to some doubts. This latest offering from the Findhorn stable does nothing to improve matters. William Bloom has been off channelling some sort of group consciousness from elsewhere which he terms "The Christ Sparks", and this is the text of their communication. Platitudeous, warm, fuzzy and caring, as well as thoroughly patronising, the messages join the ranks of other nebulous New Age communications with nothing to say. It will only hasten Findhorn's decline into the mystic Butlins.

Findhorn Press, Forres, 1995, pb £4.95, pp133, ISBN: 1-899171-15-0.

IN SEARCH OF DRACULA by Raymond T. McNally & Radu Florescu

A revised, rewritten and updated edition of the seminal work from 1972, which traced the relatively-attractive fictional character of Dracula back to the historical and exceptionally unpleasant Vlad the Impaler, who, if all that's recorded of him is true, was so disgusting an individual that it seems impossible to justify all the attention given him. There's much here on vampire folklore, fiction and film, with massive bibliographies and a filmography. A solid, scholarly work, whether your interests are historical or literary. Commendable... except that it doesn't have an index.

Robson Books, London, 1995, hb £16.95, pp312, bibs, filmography, chronology, genealogies, maps, illus. ISBN: 0-86051-969-4.

THE OAK ISLAND MYSTERY

The Secret of the World's Greatest Treasure Hunt
By Lionel & Patricia Fanthorpe

Suddenly Oak Island, its infamous 'Money Pit' and the mystery of what lies at the bottom of it is news again. This is the second book on the subject published in the last two years, and proves to be a broader survey than *Oak Island Gold* (reviewed in FT79:62). As well as sum-



marising a now-familiar story, the Fanthorpes give some prominence to the wilder theories and bring in possible connections with Glozel, the Templars and Rennes-le-Chateau (subject of the authors' previous work). They also enjoyed the advantage of talks with both the warring burrowers - Nolan and Blankenship - who squabble over Oak Island today. The book contains little that is wholly new, and some of what it does add is tantalising rather than useful - the briefest mention of another pit that may lie on nearby Frog Island, for example. But it is written in a direct and engaging style and never takes its theorising too seriously, making it an ideal overview of a fascinating subject.

Hounslow Press, 2181 Queen Street East, Suite 301, Toronto, Canada M4E 1E5 (available in the UK from Hounslow Press, 73 Lime Walk, Headington, Oxford OX3 7AD), 1995, pb, np, pp221, photos, illus, refs, bib, index. ISBN: 0-88882-170-0.

A HISTORY OF PAGAN EUROPE by Prudence Jones & Nigel Pennick

Practising pagans writing their own history might seem like a recipe for propaganda, but this is really a well-balanced and largely non-controversial look at Europe's pagan religions. The geographical scope is broad (Greek, Roman, Celtic, German, Baltic, Russian and Balkan), as is the time-scale (from the second millennium BC to the present), so the material is natu-

rally compressed. But the scholarship is solid, the presentation is clear for the general and the academic reader alike, and the detail often fascinating - as in the case of the material relating to eastern and north-eastern Europe, which has received little previous coverage. A thoroughly workmanlike overview and a necessary counterpoint to the established (largely Christian) view of history. This book deserves to go into paperback as soon as possible, so it that will reach a wider audience. Recommended.

Routledge, London, 1995; pp278, index, refs, bib, illus, photos; hb £25.00. ISBN: 0-415-09136-5.

EARTH MYSTERIES

by Philip Heselton

Designed as an encyclopaedia-style handbook for the 'Element Library' series. Philip Heselton is one of the founders of the modern British Earth Mysteries school, having paid his dues as the founder-editor of *The Ley Hunter* and a disciple of the ufologist Tony Wedd in the early Sixties. Here, in a succession of short articles almost every aspect of the subject is explained concisely: from acupuncture, leys and megaliths to dowsing, fairies and wells. The book is crisply designed with a wealth of full colour photographs. It's a superb introduction for anyone beginning an interest in the ancient landscape.

Element Books, Shaftesbury, Dorset; 1995, pb £9.99, pp112, index, bib, reading list, useful addresses, glossary. ISBN: 1-85230-714-5.

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edited by Mat Coward, illustrated by David Lyttleton

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Victor Gollancz, London; 1995, pb £3.99, pp128, drawings. ISBN: 0-575-0.

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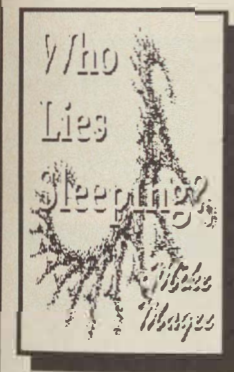
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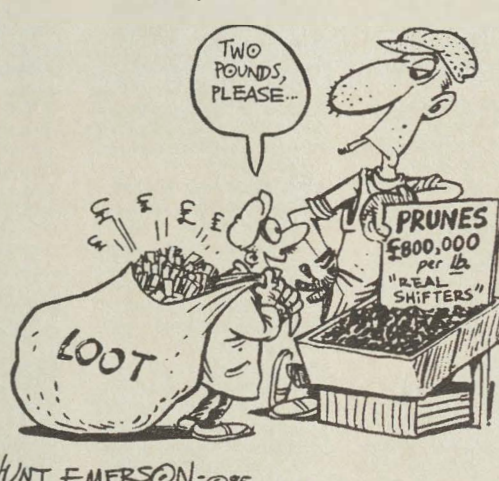
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PHENOMENOMIX

FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS INTO EVIDENCE OF SYNCHRONICITY IN AN OLD NEWSPAPER...



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HUNT EMERSON © 15

"GROCERS BAFLED BY MISSING RICE!"



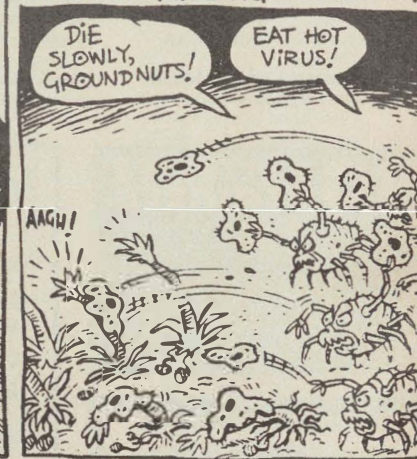
"ONLY HALF AS MUCH BUTTER IN THE COUNTRY AS THERE WAS IN 1938!"



"POLICE SEIZE 381b OF MUTTON AND 581b OF PORK IN BRIDLINGTON RAID!"



"GROUNDNUT CROPS IN THE TRANSVAAL ARE THREATENED BY A PLAQUE OF VIRUS-CARRYING LICE WHICH ARE SLOWLY KILLING THE PLANTS!"



...AND THERE'S CONSTANT REFERENCES TO METHODS OF COOKING, AND TYPES OF FOODSTUFFS IN THE SHOPS... ALL VERY ODD!



NO IT'S NOT AT ALL ODD! BRITAIN WAS STILL IN THE GRIP OF WARTIME RATIONING - SO NATURALLY THEY WERE ALL OBSESSED BY FOOD!



BUT... BUT...



LOOK - I KNOW THAT OLD NEWSPAPER... BUT REPORTS ARE MEAT AND DRINK TO WE FORTEANS, BUT THIS JUST ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH, EMERSON!



Hmph! SOUND AND FURY... SIGNIFYING NOTHING!

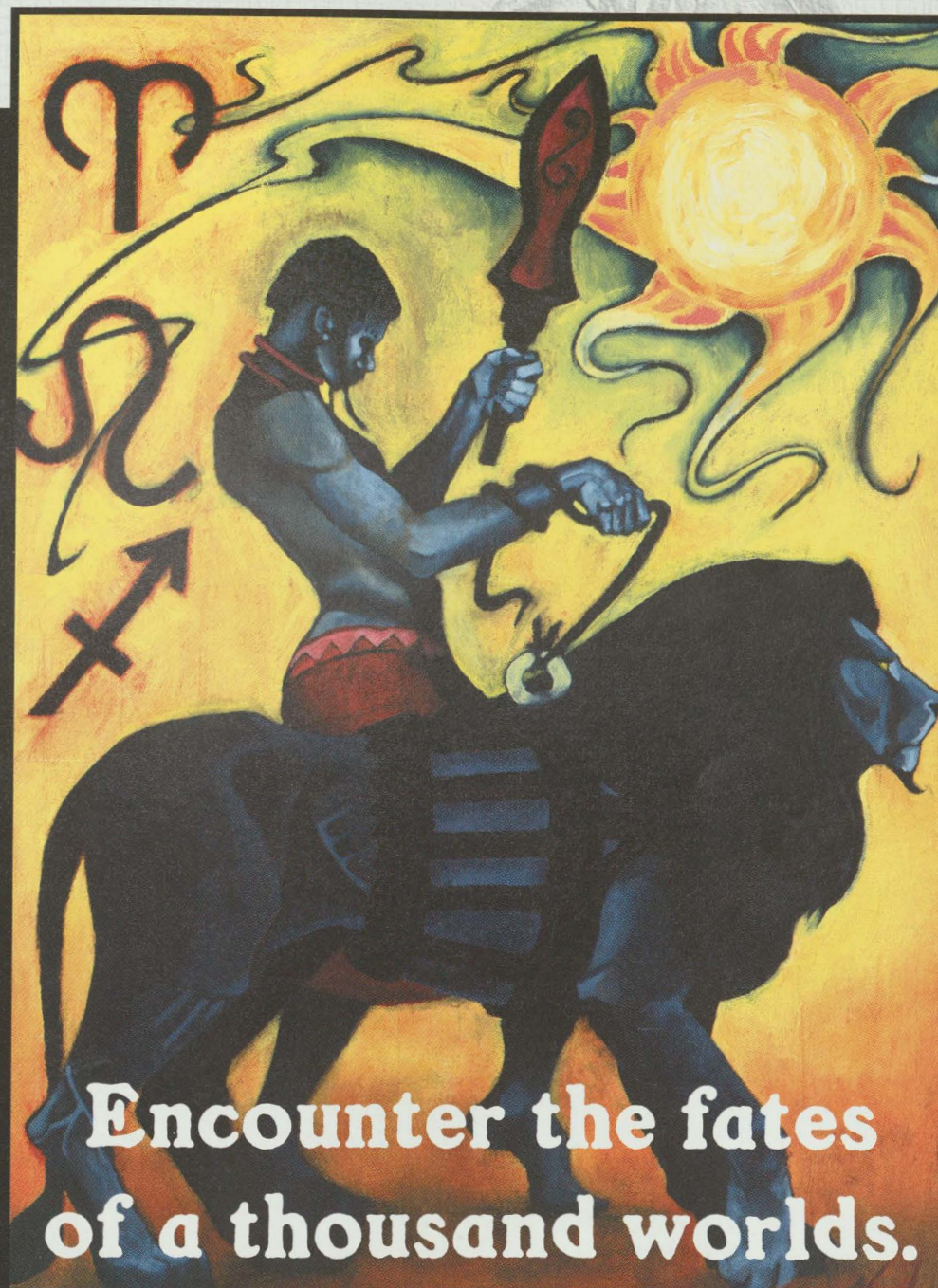
I'M GOING TO MAKE MY DINNER...



RUMBLE

RICKARD - Editor of FT.

EVERWAY



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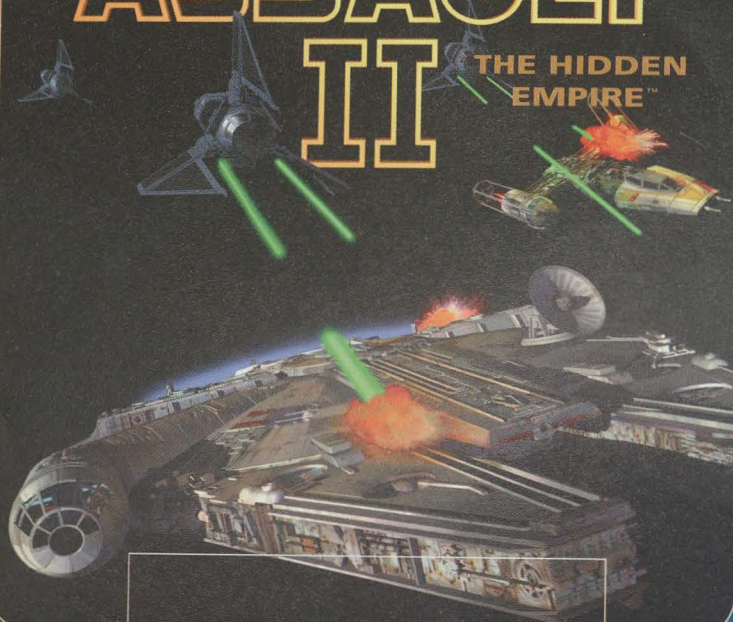
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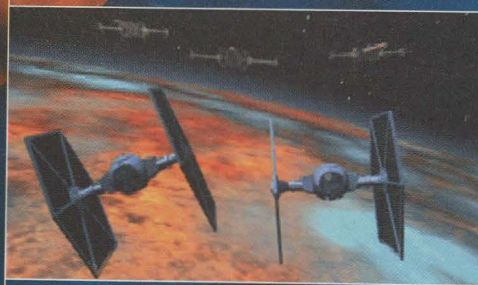
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